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THE WORKS OF

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

SWANSTON EDITION

VOLUME XXV

Of this SWANSTON EDITION in Twenty-five Volumes of the Works of ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON Two Thousand and Sixty Copies have been printed, of which only Two Thousand Copies are for sale.

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J. S. Sargent R. A. pinx.

Yours truly
Robert Louis Stevenson

THE WORKS OF

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

VOLUME TWENTY-FIVE

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THE LETTERS OF ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

EDITED BY

SIDNEY COLVIN

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1890—1894

THE LETTERS OF ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

XI

LIFE IN SAMOA

FIRST YEAR AT VAILIMA

NOVEMBER 1890–DECEMBER 1891

RETURNING from Sydney at the end of October 1890, Stevenson and his wife at once took up their abode in the wooden four-roomed cottage, or "rough barrack," as he calls it, which had been built for them in the clearing at Vailima during the months of their absence at Sydney and on their cruise in the *Equator*. Mr. Lloyd Osbourne in the meantime had started for England to wind up the family affairs at Bournemouth. During the first few months, as will be seen by the following letters, the conditions of life at Vailima were rough to the point of hardship. But matters soon mended; the work of clearing and planting went on under the eye of the master and mistress diligently and in the main successfully, though not of course without complications and misadventures. Ways and means of catering were found, and abundance began to reign in place of the makeshifts and privations of the first days. By April a better house, fit to receive the elder Mrs. Stevenson, had been built; and later in

the year plans for further extension were considered, but for the present held over. The attempt made at first to work the establishment by means of white servants and head-men indoors and out proved unsatisfactory, and was gradually superseded by the formation of an efficient native staff, which in course of time developed itself into something like a small, devoted feudal clan.

During the earlier months of 1891 Stevenson was not in continuous residence on his new property, but went away on two excursions, the first to Sydney to meet his mother; the second, in company of the American Consul Mr. Sewall, to Tutuila, a neighbouring island of the Samoan group. Of the latter, to him very interesting, trip, the correspondence contains only the beginning of an account abruptly broken off: more will be found in the extracts from his diary given in Mr. Graham Balfour's *Life* (ed. 1906, pp. 312 f.). During part of the spring he was fortunate in having the company of two distinguished Americans, the painter Lafarge and the historian Henry Adams, in addition to that of the local planters, traders, and officials, a singular and singularly mixed community. After some half-year's residence he began to realise that the arrangements made for the government of Samoa by treaty between the three powers England, Germany, and America were not working nor promising to work well. Stevenson was no abstracted student or dreamer; the human interests and human duties lying immediately about him were ever the first in his eyes; and he found himself drawn deeply into the complications of local politics, as so active a spirit could not fail to be drawn, however little taste he might have for the work.

He kept in the meantime at a fair level of health, and among the multitude of new interests was faithful in the

main business of his life—that is, to literature. He did not cease to toil uphill at the heavy task of preparing for serial publication the letters, or more properly chapters, on the South Seas. He planned and began delightedly his happiest tale of South Sea life, *The High Woods of Ulufanua*, afterwards changed to *The Beach of Falesá;* conceived the scheme, which was never carried out, of working two of his old conceptions into one long genealogical novel or fictitious family history to be called *The Shovels of Newton French;* and in the latter part of the year worked hard in continuation of *The Wrecker*. Having completed this during November, he turned at once, from a sense of duty rather than from any literary inspiration, to the *Footnote to History*, a laboriously prepared and minutely conscientious account of recent events in Samoa.

From his earliest days at Vailima, determined that our intimacy should suffer no diminution by absence, Stevenson began, to my great pleasure, the practice of writing me a monthly budget containing a full account of his doings and interests. At first the pursuits of the enthusiastic farmer, planter, and overseer filled these letters delightfully, to the exclusion of almost everything else except references to his books projected or in hand. Later these interests began to give place in his letters to those of the local politician, immersed in affairs which seemed to me exasperatingly petty and obscure, however grave the potential European complications which lay behind them. At any rate, they were hard to follow intelligently from the other side of the globe; and it was a relief whenever his correspondence turned to matters literary or domestic, or humours of his own mind and character. These letters, or so much of them as seemed suitable for publication, were originally printed separately, in the year following

the writer's death, under the title *Vailima Letters*. They are here placed, with some additions, in chronological order among those addressed to other friends or acquaintances. During this first year at Vailima his general correspondence was not nearly so large as it afterwards became; Mr. Burlingame, as representative of the house of Scribner, receiving the lion's share next to myself.

For the love of Stevenson I will ask readers to take the small amount of pains necessary to grasp and remember the main facts of Samoan politics in the ten years 1889–99. At the date when he settled in Vailima the government of the islands had lately been re-ordered between the three powers interested—namely, Germany, England, and the United States—at the Convention of Berlin (July 14, 1889). The rivalries and jealousies of these three powers, complicated with the conflicting claims of various native kings or chiefs, had for some time kept the affairs of the islands dangerously embroiled. Under the Berlin Convention, Malietoa Laupepa, who had previously been deposed and deported by the Germans in favour of a nominee of their own, was reinstated as king, to the exclusion of his kinsman, the powerful and popular Mataafa, whose titles were equally good and abilities certainly greater, but who was especially obnoxious to the Germans owing to his resistance to them during the troubles of the preceding years. In the course of that resistance a small German force had been worsted in a petty skirmish at Fagalii, and resentment at this affront to the national pride was for several years one of the chief obstacles to the reconciliation of contending interests. For a time the two kinsmen, Laupepa and Mataafa, lived on amicable terms, but presently differences arose between them. Mataafa had expected to occupy a position of influence in the government:

finding himself ignored, he withdrew to a camp (Malie) a few miles outside the town of Apia, where he lived in semi-royal state as a sort of passive rebel or rival to the recognised king. In the meantime, in the course of the year 1891, the two white officials appointed under the Berlin Convention—namely, the Chief Justice, a Swedish gentleman named Cedercrantz, and the President of the Council, Baron Senfft von Pilsach—had come out to the islands and entered on their duties. These gentlemen soon proved themselves unfitted for their task to a degree both disastrous and grotesque. Almost the entire white community were soon against them; with the native population they had no influence or credit; affairs both political and municipal went from bad to worse; and the consuls of the three powers, acting as an official board of advisers to the king, could do very little to mend them.

To the impropriety of some of the official proceedings Stevenson felt compelled to call attention in a series of letters to the Times, the first of which appeared in 1891, the remainder in 1892. He had formed the conviction that for the cure of Samoan troubles two things were necessary: first and above all, the reconciliation of Laupepa and Mataafa; secondly, the supersession of the unlucky Chief Justice and President by men better qualified for their tasks. To effect the former purpose, he made his only practical intromission in local politics, and made it unsuccessfully. The motive of his letters to the Times was the hope to effect the second. In this matter, after undergoing the risk, which was at one moment serious, of deportation, he in the end saw his wishes fulfilled. The first Chief Justice and President were replaced by better qualified persons in the course of 1893. But meantime the muddle had grown to a head. In the autumn of that year war

broke out between the partisans of Laupepa and Mataafa : the latter were defeated, and Mataafa exiled to a distant island. At the close of the following year Stevenson died. Three years later followed the death of Laupepa : then came more confused rivalries between various claimants to the kingly title. The Germans, having by this time come round to Stevenson's opinion, backed the claims of Mataafa, which they had before stubbornly disallowed, while the English and Americans stood for another candidate. In 1899 these differences resulted in a calamitous and unjustifiable action, the bombardment of native villages for several successive days by English and American war-ships. As a matter of urgent necessity, to avert worse things, new negotiations were set on foot between the three powers, with the result that England withdrew her claims in Samoa altogether, America was satisfied with the small island of Tutuila with its fine harbour of Pagopago, while the two larger islands of Upolu and Savaii were ceded to Germany. German officials have governed them well and peacefully ever since, having allowed the restored Mataafa, as long as he lived, a recognised position of headship among the native chiefs. Stevenson during his lifetime was obnoxious to the German official world. But his name and memory are now held in honour by them, his policy to a large extent practically followed, and he would have been the first to acknowledge the merits of the new order had he lived to witness it.

These remarks, following the subject down to what remains for the present its historic conclusion, will, I hope, be enough to clear it for the present purpose out of the reader's way and enable him to understand as much as is necessary of the political allusions in this and the following sections of the correspondence.

It need only be added that in reading the following pages it must be borne in mind that Mulinuu and Malie, the places respectively of Laupepa's and Mataafa's residence, are also used to signify their respective parties and followings.

To Sidney Colvin

During the absence of the Stevensons at Sydney some eight acres of the Vailima property had been cleared of jungle, a cottage roughly built on the clearing, and something done towards making the track up the hill from Apia into a practicable road. They occupied the cottage at once, and the following letters narrate of the sequel.

In the Mountain, Apia, Samoa,
Monday, November 2nd, 1890.

MY DEAR COLVIN,—This is a hard and interesting and beautiful life that we lead now. Our place is in a deep cleft of Vaea Mountain, some six hundred feet above the sea, embowered in forest, which is our strangling enemy, and which we combat with axes and dollars. I went crazy over outdoor work, and had at last to confine myself to the house, or literature must have gone by the board. *Nothing* is so interesting as weeding, clearing, and path-making; the oversight of labourers becomes a disease; it is quite an effort not to drop into the farmer; and it does make you feel so well. To come down covered with mud and drenched with sweat and rain after some hours in the bush, change, rub down, and take a chair in the verandah, is to taste a quiet conscience. And the strange thing that I mark is this: If I go out and make sixpence, bossing my labourers and plying the cutlass or the spade, idiot conscience applauds me; if I sit in the house and make twenty pounds, idiot conscience wails over my neglect and the day wasted. For near a fortnight I did not go beyond the verandah; then I found my rush of work run out, and went down for the night to Apia; put in

Sunday afternoon with our consul, "a nice young man," dined with my friend H. J. Moors in the evening, went to church—no less—at the white and half-white church—I had never been before, and was much interested; the woman I sat next *looked* a full-blood native, and it was in the prettiest and readiest English that she sang the hymns; back to Moors', where we yarned of the islands, being both wide wanderers, till bedtime; bed, sleep, breakfast, horse saddled; round to the mission, to get Mr. Clarke to be my interpreter; over with him to the King's, whom I have not called on since my return; received by that mild old gentleman; have some interesting talk with him about Samoan superstitions and my land—the scene of a great battle in his (Malietoa Laupepa's) youth—the place which we have cleared the platform of his fort—the gulley of the stream full of dead bodies—the fight rolled off up Vaea mountain-side; back with Clarke to the mission; had a bit of lunch and consulted over a queer point of missionary policy just arisen, about our new Town Hall and the balls there—too long to go into, but a quaint example of the intricate questions which spring up daily in the missionary path.[1]

Then off up the hill; Jack very fresh, the sun (close on noon) staring hot, the breeze very strong and pleasant; the ineffable green country all round—gorgeous little birds (I think they are humming-birds, but they say not) skirmishing in the wayside flowers. About a quarter way up I met a native coming down with the trunk of a cocoa

[1] "In the missionary work which is being done among the Samoans, Mr. Stevenson was especially interested. He was an observant, shrewd, yet ever generous critic of all our religious and educational organisations. His knowledge of native character and life enabled him to understand missionary difficulties, while his genial contact with all sorts and conditions of men made him keen to detect deficiencies in men and methods, and apt in useful suggestion." The above is the testimony of the Mr. Clarke here mentioned (Rev. W. E. Clarke of the London Missionary Society). This gentleman was from the first one of the most valued friends of Mr. Stevenson and his family in Samoa, and, when the end came, read the funeral service beside his grave on Mount Vaea.

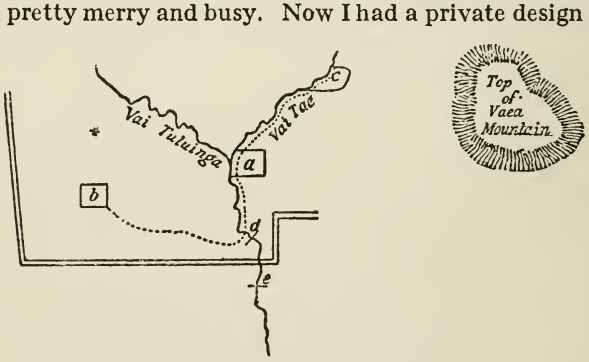
palm across his shoulder; his brown breast glittering with sweat and oil: "Talofa"—"Talofa, alii—You see that white man? He speak for you." "White man he gone up here?"—"Ioe" (Yes)—"Tofa, alii"—"Tofa, soifua!" I put on Jack up the steep path, till he is all as white as shaving stick—Brown's euxesis, wish I had some—past Tanugamanono, a bush village—see into the houses as I pass—they are open sheds scattered on a green—see the brown folk sitting there, suckling kids, sleeping on their stiff wooden pillows—then on through the wood path—and here I find the mysterious white man (poor devil!) with his twenty years' certificate of good behaviour as a book-keeper, frozen out by the strikes in the colonies, come up here on a chance, no work to be found, big hotel bill, no ship to leave in—and come up to beg twenty dollars because he heard I was a Scotchman, offering to leave his portmanteau in pledge. Settle this, and on again; and here my house comes in view, and a war whoop fetches my wife and Henry (or Simelé), our Samoan boy, on the front balcony; and I am home again, and only sorry that I shall have to go down again to Apia this day week. I could, and would, dwell here unmoved, but there are things to be attended to.

Never say I don't give you details and news. That is a picture of a letter.

I have been hard at work since I came; three chapters of *The Wrecker*, and since that, eight of the South Sea book, and, along and about and in between, a hatful of verses. Some day I'll send the verse to you, and you'll say if any of it is any good. I have got in a better vein with the South Sea book, as I think you will see; I think these chapters will do for the volume without much change. Those that I did in the *Janet Nicoll*, under the most ungodly circumstances, I fear will want a lot of suppling and lightening, but I hope to have your remarks in a month or two upon that point. It seems a long while since I have heard from you. I do hope you are

well. I am wonderful, but tired from so much work; 'tis really immense what I have done; in the South Sea book I have fifty pages copied fair, some of which has been four times, and all twice written; certainly fifty pages of solid scriving inside a fortnight, but I was at it by seven a.m. till lunch, and from two till four or five every day; between whiles, verse and blowing on the flageolet; never outside. If you could see this place! but I don't want any one to see it till my clearing is done, and my house built. It will be a home for angels.

So far I wrote after my bit of dinner, some cold meat and bananas, on arrival. Then out to see where Henry and some of the men were clearing the garden; for it was plain there was to be no work to-day indoors, and I must set in consequence to farmering. I stuck a good while on the way up, for the path there is largely my own handiwork, and there were a lot of sprouts and saplings and stones to be removed. Then I reached our clearing just where the streams join in one; it had a fine autumn smell of burning, the smoke blew in the woods, and the boys were pretty merry and busy. Now I had a private design :—



* Point referred to in text.
..... Paths.
═══ Our boundary.

a. Garden. *b. Present house.*
c. Banana patch. *d. Waterfall.*
e. Large waterfall into deep gorge where the heat of the fight was.

The Vaita'e I had explored pretty far up; not yet the other stream, the Vaituliga (g=nasal n, as ng in sing); and up that, with my wood knife, I set off alone. It is here quite dry; it went through endless woods; about as broad as a Devonshire lane, here and there crossed by fallen trees; huge trees overhead in the sun, dripping lianas and tufted with orchids, tree ferns, ferns depending with air roots from the steep banks, great arums—I had not skill enough to say if any of them were the edible kind, one of our staples here!—hundreds of bananas—another staple—and alas! I had skill enough to know all of these for the bad kind that bears no fruit. My Henry moralised over this the other day; how hard it was that the bad banana flourished wild, and the good must be weeded and tended; and I had not the heart to tell him how fortunate they were here, and how hungry were other lands by comparison. The ascent of this lovely lane of my dry stream filled me with delight. I could not but be reminded of old Mayne Reid, as I have been more than once since I came to the tropics; and I thought, if Reid had been still living, I would have written to tell him that, for me, *it had come true;* and I thought, forbye, that, if the great powers go on as they are going, and the Chief Justice delays, it would come truer still; and the war-conch will sound in the hills, and my home will be inclosed in camps, before the year is ended. And all at once—mark you, how Mayne Reid is on the spot—a strange thing happened. I saw a liana stretch across the bed of the brook about breast-high, swung up my knife to sever it, and—behold, it was a wire! On either hand it plunged into thick bush; to-morrow I shall see where it goes and get a guess perhaps of what it means. To-day I know no more than—there it is. A little higher the brook began to trickle, then to fill. At last, as I meant to do some work upon the homeward trail, it was time to turn. I did not return by the stream; knife in hand, as long as my endurance lasted, I was to cut a path in the congested bush.

At first it went ill with me; I got badly stung as high as the elbows by the stinging plant; I was nearly hung in a tough liana—a rotten trunk giving way under my feet; it was deplorable bad business. And an axe—if I dared swing one—would have been more to the purpose than my cutlass. Of a sudden things began to go strangely easier; I found stumps, bushing out again; my body began to wonder, then my mind; I raised my eyes and looked ahead; and, by George, I was no longer pioneering, I had struck an old track overgrown, and was restoring an old path. So I laboured till I was in such a state that Carolina Wilhelmina Skeggs[1] could scarce have found a name for it. Thereon desisted; returned to the stream; made my way down that stony track to the garden, where the smoke was still hanging and the sun was still in the high tree-tops, and so home. Here, fondly supposing my long day was over, I rubbed down; exquisite agony; water spreads the poison of these weeds; I got it all over my hands, on my chest, in my eyes, and presently, while eating an orange, *à la* Rarotonga, burned my lip and eye with orange juice. Now all day, our three small pigs had been adrift, to the mortal peril of our corn, lettuce, onions, etc., and as I stood smarting on the back verandah, behold the three piglings issuing from the wood just opposite. Instantly I got together as many boys as I could—three, and got the pigs penned against the rampart of the sty, till the others joined; whereupon we formed a cordon, closed, captured the deserters, and dropped them, squeaking amain, into their strengthened barracks where, please God, they may now stay!

Perhaps you may suppose the day now over; you are not the head of a plantation, my juvenile friend. Politics succeeded: Henry got adrift in his English, Bene was too cowardly to tell me what he was after: result, I have lost

[1] The lady in the *Vicar of Wakefield* who declares herself "all in a muck of sweat."

seven good labourers, and had to sit down and write to you to keep my temper. Let me sketch my lads.—Henry —Henry has gone down to town or I could not be writing to you—this were the hour of his English lesson else, when he learns what he calls " long explessions " or " your chief's language " for the matter of an hour and a half— Henry is a chiefling from Savaii ; I once loathed, I now like and—pending fresh discoveries—have a kind of respect for Henry. He does good work for us ; goes among the labourers, bossing and watching ; helps Fanny ; is civil, kindly, thoughtful ; *O si sic semper !* But will he be " his sometime self throughout the year " ? Anyway, he has deserved of us, and he must disappoint me sharply ere I give him up.—Bene—or Peni—Ben, in plain English—is supposed to be my ganger ; the Lord love him ! God made a truckling coward, there is his full history. He cannot tell me what he wants ; he dares not tell me what is wrong ; he dares not transmit my orders or translate my censures. And with all this, honest, sober, industrious, miserably smiling over the miserable issue of his own unmanliness.—Paul—a German—cook and steward—a glutton of work—a splendid fellow ; drawbacks, three : (1) no cook ; (2) an inveterate bungler ; a man with twenty thumbs, continually falling in the dishes, throwing out the dinner, preserving the garbage ; (3) a dr—, well, don't let us say that—but we daren't let him go to town, and he—poor, good soul—is afraid to be let go.—Lafaele (Raphael), a strong, dull, deprecatory man ; splendid with an axe, if watched ; the better for a rowing, when he calls me " Papa " in the most wheedling tones ; desperately afraid of ghosts, so that he dare not walk alone up in the banana patch—see map. The rest are changing labourers ; and to-night, owing to the miserable cowardice of Peni, who did not venture to tell me what the men wanted—and which was no more than fair—all are gone—and my weeding in the article of being finished ! Pity the sorrows of a planter.

I am, Sir, yours, and be jowned to you, The Planter,
R. L. S.

Tuesday, 3*rd*.—I begin to see the whole scheme of letter-writing; you sit down every day and pour out an equable stream of twaddle.

This morning all my fears were fled, and all the trouble had fallen to the lot of Peni himself, who deserved it; my field was full of weeders; and I am again able to justify the ways of God. All morning I worked at the *South Seas*, and finished the chapter I had stuck upon on Saturday. Fanny, awfully hove-to with rheumatics and injuries received upon the field of sport and glory, chasing pigs, was unable to go up and down stairs, so she sat upon the back verandah, and my work was chequered by her cries. "Paul, you take a spade to do that—dig a hole first. If you do that, you'll cut your foot off! Here, you boy, what you do there? You no get work? You go find Simelé; he give you work. Peni, you tell this boy he go find Simelé; suppose Simelé no give him work, you tell him go 'way. I no want him here. That boy no good."—*Peni* (from the distance in reassuring tones), "All right, sir!"—*Fanny* (after a long pause), "Peni, you tell that boy go find Simelé! I no want him stand here all day. I no pay that boy. I see him all day. He no do nothing."—Luncheon, beef, soda-scones, fried bananas, pine-apple in claret, coffee. Try to write a poem; no go. Play the flageolet. Then sneakingly off to farmering and pioneering. Four gangs at work on our place; a lively scene; axes crashing and smoke blowing; all the knives are out. But I rob the garden party of one without a stock, and you should see my hand—cut to ribbons. Now I want to do my path up the Vaituliga single-handed, and I want it to burst on the public complete. Hence, with devilish ingenuity, I begin it at different places; so that if you stumble on one section, you may not even then suspect the fulness of my labours. Accordingly, I started in a new place, below the wire, and hoping to work up

to it. It was perhaps lucky I had so bad a cutlass, and my smarting hand bid me stay before I had got up to the wire, but just in season, so that I was only the better of my activity, not dead beat as yesterday.

A strange business it was, and infinitely solitary; away above, the sun was in the high tree-tops; the lianas noosed and sought to hang me; the saplings struggled, and came up with that sob of death that one gets to know so well; great, soft, sappy trees fell at a lick of the cutlass, little tough switches laughed at and dared my best endeavour. Soon, toiling down in that pit of verdure, I heard blows on the far side, and then laughter. I confess a chill settled on my heart. Being so dead alone, in a place where by rights none should be beyond me, I was aware, upon interrogation, if those blows had drawn nearer, I should (of course quite unaffectedly) have executed a strategic movement to the rear; and only the other day I was lamenting my insensibility to superstition! Am I beginning to be sucked in? Shall I become a midnight twitterer like my neighbours? At times I thought the blows were echoes; at times I thought the laughter was from birds. For our birds are strangely human in their calls. Vaea mountain about sundown sometimes rings with shrill cries, like the hails of merry, scattered children. As a matter of fact, I believe stealthy wood-cutters from Tanugamanono were above me in the wood and answerable for the blows; as for the laughter, a woman and two children had come and asked Fanny's leave to go up shrimp-fishing in the burn; beyond doubt, it was these I heard. Just at the right time I returned; to wash down, change, and begin this snatch of letter before dinner was ready, and to finish it afterwards, before Henry has yet put in an appearance for his lesson in "long explessions."

Dinner: stewed beef and potatoes, baked bananas, new loaf-bread hot from the oven, pine-apple in claret. These are great days; we have been low in the past; but now are we as belly-gods, enjoying all things.

Wednesday, (*Hist. Vailima resumed.*)—A gorgeous evening of after-glow in the great tree-tops and behind the mountain, and full moon over the lowlands and the sea, inaugurated a night of horrid cold. To you effete denizens of the so-called temperate zone, it had seemed nothing; neither of us could sleep; we were up seeking extra coverings, I know not at what hour—it was as bright as day. The moon right over Vaea—near due west, the birds strangely silent, and the wood of the house tingling with cold; I believe it must have been 60°! Consequence: Fanny has a headache and is wretched, and I could do no work. (I am trying all round for a place to hold my pen; you will hear why later on; this to explain penmanship.) I wrote two pages, very bad, no movement, no life or interest; then I wrote a business letter; then took to tootling on the flageolet, till glory should call me farmering.

I took up at the fit time Lafaele and Mauga—Mauga, accent on the first, is a mountain, I don't know what Maugà means—mind what I told you of the value of g—to the garden, and set them digging, then turned my attention to the path. I could not go into my bush path for two reasons: 1st, sore hands; 2nd, had on my trousers and good shoes. Lucky it was. Right in the wild lime hedge which cuts athwart us just homeward of the garden, I found a great bed of kuikui—sensitive plant—our deadliest enemy. A fool brought it to this island in a pot, and used to lecture and sentimentalise over the tender thing. The tender thing has now taken charge of this island, and men fight it, with torn hands, for bread and life. A singular, insidious thing, shrinking and biting like a weasel; clutching by its roots as a limpet clutches to a rock. As I fought him, I bettered some verses in my poem, *The Woodman;*[1] the only thought I gave to letters. Though the kuikui was thick, there was but a small patch of it, and when I was done I attacked the wild lime, and had a hand-to-hand skirmish with its spines and elastic suckers. All this time,

[1] First published in the New Review, January 1895.

close by, in the cleared space of the garden, Lafaele and Maugà were digging. Suddenly quoth Lafaele, "Somebody he sing out."—"Somebody he sing out? All right. I go." And I went and found they had been whistling and "singing out" for long, but the fold of the hill and the uncleared bush shuts in the garden so that no one heard, and I was late for dinner, and Fanny's headache was cross; and when the meal was over, we had to cut up a pineapple which was going bad, to make jelly of; and the next time you have a handful of broken blood-blisters, apply pine-apple juice, and you will give me news of it, and I request a specimen of your hand of write five minutes after—the historic moment when I tackled this history. My day so far.

Fanny was to have rested. Blessed Paul began making a duck-house; she let him be; the duck-house fell down, and she had to set her hand to it. He was then to make a drinking-place for the pigs; she let him be again—he made a stair by which the pigs will probably escape this evening, and she was near weeping. Impossible to blame the indefatigable fellow; energy is too rare and goodwill too noble a thing to discourage; but it's trying when she wants a rest. Then she had to cook the dinner; then, of course—like a fool and a woman—must wait dinner for me, and make a flurry of herself. Her day so far. *Cetera adhuc desunt.*

Friday—I think.—I have been too tired to add to this chronicle, which will at any rate give you some guess of our employment. All goes well; the kuikui—(think of this mispronunciation having actually infected me to the extent of misspelling! tuitui is the word by rights)—the tuitui is all out of the paddock—a fenced park between the house and boundary; Peni's men start to-day on the road; the garden is part burned, part dug; and Henry, at the head of a troop of underpaid assistants, is hard at work clearing. The part clearing you will see from the map; from the house run down to the stream side, up

the stream nearly as high as the garden; then back to the star which I have just added to the map.

My long, silent contests in the forest have had a strange effect on me. The unconcealed vitality of these vegetables, their exuberant number and strength, the attempts—I can use no other word—of lianas to enwrap and capture the intruder, the awful silence, the knowledge that all my efforts are only like the performance of an actor, the thing of a moment, and the wood will silently and swiftly heal them up with fresh effervescence; the cunning sense of the tuitui, suffering itself to be touched with wind-swayed grasses and not minding—but let the grass be moved by a man, and it shuts up; the whole silent battle, murder, and slow death of the contending forest; weigh upon the imagination. My poem *The Woodman* stands; but I have taken refuge in a new story, which just shot through me like a bullet in one of my moments of awe, alone in that tragic jungle:—

The High Woods of Ulufanua[1]

1. A South Sea Bridal.
2. Under the Ban.
3. Savao and Faavao.
4. Cries in the High Wood.
5. Rumour full of Tongues.
6. The Hour of Peril.
7. The Day of Vengeance.

It is very strange, very extravagant, I dare say; but it's varied, and picturesque, and has a pretty love affair, and ends well. Ulufanua is a lovely Samoan word, ulu = grove; fanua = land; grove-land—"the tops of the high trees." Savao, "sacred to the wood," and Faavao, "woodways," are the names of two of the characters, Ulufanua the name of the supposed island.

[1] Afterwards changed into *The Beach of Falesá*.

I am very tired, and rest off to-day from all but letters. Fanny is quite done up; she could not sleep last night, something it seemed like asthma—I trust not. I suppose Lloyd will be about, so you can give him the benefit of this long scrawl.[1] Never say that I *can't* write a letter, say that I don't.—Yours ever, my dearest fellow,

R. L. S.

Later on Friday.—The guidwife had bread to bake, and she baked it in a pan, O! But between whiles she was down with me weeding sensitive in the paddock. The men have but now passed over it; I was round in that very place to see the weeding was done thoroughly, and already the reptile springs behind our heels. Tuitui is a truly strange beast, and gives food for thought. I am nearly sure—I cannot yet be quite, I mean to experiment, when I am less on the hot chase of the beast—that, even at the instant he shrivels up his leaves, he strikes his prickles downward so as to catch the uprooting finger; instinctive, say the gabies; but so is man's impulse to strike out. One thing that takes and holds me is to see the strange variation in the propagation of alarm among these rooted beasts; at times it spreads to a radius (I speak by the guess of the eye) of five or six inches; at times only one individual plant appears frightened at a time. We tried how long it took one to recover; 'tis a sanguine creature; it is all abroad again before (I guess again) two minutes. It is odd how difficult in this world it is to be armed. The double armour of this plant betrays it. In a thick tuft, where the leaves disappear, I thrust in my hand, and the bite of the thorns betrays the topmost stem. In the open again, and when I hesitate if it be clover, a touch on the leaves, and its fine sense and retractile action betrays its identity at once. Yet it has one gift incomparable. Rome had virtue and knowledge; Rome perished. The sensitive plant has indigestible seeds

[1] Mr. Lloyd Osbourne had come to England to pack and wind up affairs at Skerryvore.

—so they say—and it will flourish for ever. I give my advice thus to a young plant—have a strong root, a weak stem, and an indigestible seed; so you will outlast the eternal city, and your progeny will clothe mountains, and the irascible planter will blaspheme in vain. The weak point of tuitui is that its stem is strong.

Supplementary Page.—Here beginneth the third lesson, which is not from the planter but from a less estimable character, the writer of books.

I want you to understand about this South Sea Book. The job is immense; I stagger under material. I have seen the first big *tache.* It was necessary to see the smaller ones; the letters were at my hand for the purpose, but I was not going to lose this experience; and, instead of writing mere letters, have poured out a lot of stuff for the book. How this works and fits, time is to show. But I believe, in time, I shall get the whole thing in form. Now, up to date, that is all my design, and I beg to warn you till we have the whole (or much) of the stuff together, you can hardly judge—and I can hardly judge. Such a mass of stuff is to be handled, if possible without repetition—so much foreign matter to be introduced—if possible with perspicuity—and, as much as can be, a spirit of narrative to be preserved. You will find that come stronger as I proceed, and get the explanations worked through. Problems of style are (as yet) dirt under my feet; my problem is architectural, creative — to get this stuff jointed and moving. If I can do that, I will trouble you for style; anybody might write it, and it would be splendid; well-engineered, the masses right, the blooming thing travelling—twig?

This I wanted you to understand, for lots of the stuff sent home is, I imagine, rot—and slovenly rot—and some of it pompous rot; and I want you to understand it's a *lay-in.*

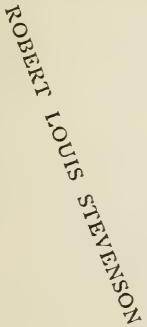
Soon, if the tide of poeshie continues, I'll send you a whole lot to damn. You never said thank you for the

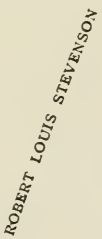
handsome tribute addressed to you from Apemama ;[1] such is the gratitude of the world to the God-sent poick. Well, well :—" Vex not thou the poick's mind, With thy coriaceous ingratitude, The P. will be to your faults more than a little blind, And yours is a far from handsome attitude." Having thus dropped into poetry in a spirit of friendship, I have the honour to subscribe myself, Sir, your obedient humble servant, SILAS WEGG.

I suppose by this you will have seen the lad—and his feet will have been in the Monument—and his eyes beheld the face of George.[2] Well !

There is much eloquence in a well !
I am, Sir,
Yours
The Epigrammatist

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON





FINIS—EXPLICIT

[1] The lines beginning " I heard the pulse of the besieging sea " ; see Vol. xxiv., p. 366.

[2] " The Monument " was his name for my house at the British Museum, and George was my old faithful servant, George Went.

To E. L. Burlingame

The opening sentences of the following refer of course to *The Wrecker*, and particularly to a suggestion of mine concerning the relation of the main narrative to the prologue :—

Vailima, Apia, Samoa, Nov. 7, 1890.

I wish you to add to the words at the end of the prologue ; they run, I think, thus, " And this is the yarn of Loudon Dodd " ; add, " not as he told, but as he wrote it afterwards for his diversion." This becomes the more needful, because, when all is done, I shall probably revert to Tai-o-hae, and give final details about the characters in the way of a conversation between Dodd and Havers. These little snippets of information and *faits-divers* have always a disjointed, broken-backed appearance ; yet, readers like them. In this book we have introduced so many characters, that this kind of epilogue will be looked for ; and I rather hope, looking far ahead, that I can lighten it in dialogue.

We are well past the middle now. How does it strike you ? and can you guess my mystery ? It will make a fattish volume !

I say, have you ever read the *Highland Widow ?* I never had till yesterday : I am half inclined, bar a trip or two, to think it Scott's masterpiece ; and it has the name of a failure ! Strange things are readers.

I expect proofs and revises in duplicate.

We have now got into a small barrack at our place. We see the sea six hundred feet below filling the end of two vales of forest. On one hand the mountain runs above us some thousand feet higher ; great trees stand round us in our clearing ; there is an endless voice of birds ; I have never lived in such a heaven ; just now, I have fever, which mitigates but not destroys my gusto in my circumstances.—You may envy

Robert Louis Stevenson.

. . . O, I don't know if I mentioned that having seen your new tail to the magazine, I cried off interference, at least for this trip. Did I ask you to send me my books and papers, and all the bound volumes of the mag.? *quorum pars.* I might add that were there a good book or so—new—I don't believe there is—such would be welcome.

I desire—I positively begin to awake—to be remembered to Scribner, Low, St. Gaudens, Russell Sullivan. Well, well, you fellows have the feast of reason and the flow of soul; I have a better-looking place and climate: you should hear the birds on the hill now! The day has just wound up with a shower; it is still light without, though I write within here at the cheek of a lamp; my wife and an invaluable German are wrestling about bread on the back verandah; and how the birds and the frogs are rattling, and piping, and hailing from the woods! Here and there a throaty chuckle; here and there, cries like those of jolly children who have lost their way; here and there, the ringing sleigh-bell of the tree frog. Out and away down below me on the sea it is still raining; it will be wet under foot on schooners, and the house will leak; how well I know that! Here the showers only patter on the iron roof, and sometimes roar; and within, the lamp burns steady on the tafa-covered walls, with their dusky tartan patterns, and the book-shelves with their thin array of books; and no squall can rout my house or bring my heart into my mouth.—The well-pleased South Sea Islander, R. L. S.

To Sidney Colvin

Vailima, Tuesday, November 25th, 1890.

MY DEAR COLVIN,—I wanted to go out bright and early to go on with my survey. You never heard of that. The world has turned, and much water run under bridges,

since I stopped my diary. I have written six more chapters of the book, all good I potently believe, and given up, as a deception of the devil's, the *High Woods*. I have been once down to Apia, to a huge native feast at Seumanutafa's, the chief of Apia. There was a vast mass of food, crowds of people, the police charging among them with whips, the whole in high good humour on both sides; infinite noise; and a historic event—Mr. Clarke, the missionary, and his wife, assisted at a native dance. On my return from this function, I found work had stopped; no more *South Seas* in my belly. Well, Henry had cleared a great deal of our bush on a contract, and it ought to be measured. I set myself to the task with a tape-line; it seemed a dreary business; then I borrowed a prismatic compass, and tackled the task afresh. I have no books; I had not touched an instrument nor given a thought to the business since the year of grace 1871; you can imagine with what interest I sat down yesterday afternoon to reduce my observations; five triangles I had taken; all five came right, to my ineffable joy. Our dinner—the lowest we have ever been—consisted of *one avocado pear* between Fanny and me, a ship's biscuit for the guidman, white bread for the Missis, and red wine for the twa. No salt horse, even, in all Vailima! After dinner Henry came, and I began to teach him decimals; you wouldn't think I knew them myself after so long desuetude!

I could not but wonder how Henry stands his evenings here; the Polynesian loves gaiety—I feed him with decimals, the mariner's compass, derivations, grammar, and the like; delecting myself, after the manner of my race, *moult tristement*. I suck my paws; I live for my dexterities and by my accomplishments; even my clumsinesses are my joy—my woodcuts, my stumbling on the pipe, this surveying even—and even weeding sensitive; anything to do with the mind, with the eye, with the hand —with a part of *me;* diversion flows in these ways for the dreary man. But gaiety is what these children want;

to sit in a crowd, tell stories and pass jests, to hear one another laugh and scamper with the girls. It's good fun, too, I believe, but not for R. L. S., *ætat.* 40. Which I am now past forty, Custodian, and not one penny the worse that I can see; as amusable as ever; to be on board ship is reward enough for me; give me the wages of going on—in a schooner! Only, if ever I were gay, which I misremember, I am gay no more. And here is poor Henry passing his evenings on my intellectual husks, which the professors masticated; keeping the accounts of the estate—all wrong I have no doubt—I keep no check, beyond a very rough one; marching in with a cloudy brow, and the day-book under his arm; tackling decimals, coming with cases of conscience—how would an English chief behave in such a case? etc.; and, I am bound to say, on any glimmer of a jest, lapsing into native hilarity as a tree straightens itself after the wind is by. The other night I remembered my old friend—I believe yours also —Scholastikos, and administered the crow and the anchor —they were quite fresh to Samoan ears (this implies a very early severance)—and I thought the anchor would have made away with my Simelé altogether.

Fanny's time, in this interval, has been largely occupied in contending publicly with wild swine. We have a black sow; we call her Jack Sheppard; impossible to confine her—impossible also for her to be confined! To my sure knowledge she has been in an interesting condition for longer than any other sow in story; else she had long died the death; as soon as she is brought to bed, she shall count her days. I suppose that sow has cost us in days' labour from thirty to fifty dollars; as many as eight boys (at a dollar a day) have been twelve hours in chase of her. Now it is supposed that Fanny has outwitted her; she grins behind broad planks in what was once the cook-house. She is a wild pig; far handsomer than any tame; and when she found the cook-house was too much for her methods of evasion, she lay down on

the floor and refused food and drink for a whole Sunday. On Monday morning she relapsed, and now eats and drinks like a little man. I am reminded of an incident. Two Sundays ago, the sad word was brought that the sow was out again; this time she had carried another in her flight. Moors and I and Fanny were strolling up to the garden, and there by the waterside we saw the black sow, looking guilty. It seemed to me beyond words; but Fanny's *cri du cœur* was delicious: "G-r-r!" she cried; "nobody loves you!"

I would I could tell you the moving story of our cart and cart-horses; the latter are dapple-grey, about sixteen hands, and of enormous substance; the former was a kind of red and green shandrydan with a driving bench; plainly unfit to carry lumber or to face our road. (Remember that the last third of my road, about a mile, is all made out of a bridle-track by my boys—and my dollars.) It was supposed a white man had been found—an ex-German artilleryman—to drive this last; he proved incapable and drunken; the gallant Henry, who had never driven before, and knew nothing about horses—except the rats and weeds that flourish on the islands—volunteered; Moors accepted, proposing to follow and supervise: despatched his work and started after. No cart! he hurried on up the road—no cart. Transfer the scene to Vailima, where on a sudden, to Fanny and me, the cart appears, apparently at a hard gallop, some two hours before it was expected; Henry radiantly ruling chaos from the bench. It stopped: it was long before we had time to remark that the axle was twisted like the letter L. Our first care was the horses. There they stood, black with sweat, the sweat raining from them—literally raining—their heads down, their feet apart—and blood running thick from the nostrils of the mare. We got out Fanny's under-clothes—couldn't find anything else but our blankets—to rub them down, and in about half an hour we had the blessed satisfaction to see one after the other

take a bite or two of grass. But it was a toucher ; a little more and these steeds would have been foundered.

Monday, 31*st* (?) *November.*—Near a week elapsed, and no journal. On Monday afternoon, Moors rode up and I rode down with him, dined, and went over in the evening to the American consulate ; present, Consul-General Sewall, Lieut. Parker and Mrs. Parker, Lafarge the American decorator, Adams an American historian ; we talked late, and it was arranged I was to write up for Fanny, and we should both dine on the morrow.

On the Friday, I was all forenoon in the mission house, lunched at the German consulate, went on board the *Sperber* (German war-ship) in the afternoon, called on my lawyer on my way out to American Consulate, and talked till dinner time with Adams, whom I am supplying with introductions and information for Tahiti and the Marquesas. Fanny arrived a wreck, and had to lie down. The moon rose, one day past full, and we dined in the verandah, a good dinner on the whole ; talk with Lafarge about art and the lovely dreams of art students.[1] Remark by Adams, which took me briskly home to the Monument —" I only liked one *young* woman—and that was Mrs. Procter."[2] Henry James would like that. Back by moonlight in the consulate boat—Fanny being too tired to walk—to Moors's. Saturday, I left Fanny to rest, and was off early to the Mission, where the politics are thrilling just now. The native pastors (to every one's surprise)

[1] The late Mr. John Lafarge, long an honoured *doyen* among New York artists, whose record of his holiday in the South Seas, in the shape of a series of water-colour sketches of the scenery and people (with a catalogue full of interesting notes and observations), was one of the features of the Champ de Mars Salon in 1895.

[2] Mrs. B. W. Procter, the stepdaughter of Basil Montagu and widow of Barry Cornwall. The death of this spirited veteran in 1888 snapped one of the last links with the days and memories of Keats and Coleridge. A shrewd and not too indulgent judge of character, she took R. L. S. into warm favour at first sight, and never spoke of or inquired after him but with unwonted tenderness.

have moved of themselves in the matter of the native dances, desiring the restrictions to be removed, or rather to be made dependent on the character of the dance. Clarke, who had feared censure and all kinds of trouble, is, of course, rejoicing greatly. A characteristic feature: the argument of the pastors was handed in in the form of a fictitious narrative of the voyage of one Mr. Pye, an English traveller, and his conversation with a chief; there are touches of satire in this educational romance. Mr. Pye, for instance, admits that he knows nothing about the Bible. At the Mission I was sought out by Henry in a devil of an agitation; he has been made the victim of a forgery—a crime hitherto unknown in Samoa. I had to go to Folau, the chief judge here, in the matter. Folau had never heard of the offence, and begged to know what was the punishment; there may be lively times in forgery ahead. It seems the sort of crime to tickle a Polynesian. After lunch—you can see what a busy three days I am describing—we set off to ride home. My Jack was full of the devil of corn and too much grass, and no work. I had to ride ahead and leave Fanny behind. He is a most gallant little rascal is my Jack, and takes the whole way as hard as the rider pleases. Single incident: half-way up, I find my boys upon the road and stop and talk with Henry in his character of ganger, as long as Jack will suffer me. Fanny drones in after; we make a show of eating—or I do—she goes to bed about half-past six! I write some verses, read Irving's *Washington*, and follow about half-past eight. O, one thing more I did, in a prophetic spirit. I had made sure Fanny was not fit to be left alone, and wrote before turning in a letter to Chalmers, telling him I could not meet him in Auckland at this time. By eleven at night, Fanny got me wakened —she had tried twice in vain—and I found her very bad. Thence till three, we laboured with mustard poultices, laudanum, soda and ginger—Heavens! wasn't it cold; the land breeze was as cold as a river; the moon was glorious in

the paddock, and the great boughs and the black shadows of our trees were inconceivable. But it was a poor time.

Sunday morning found Fanny, of course, a complete wreck, and myself not very brilliant. Paul had to go to Vailele *re* cocoa-nuts; it was doubtful if he could be back by dinner; never mind, said I, I'll take dinner when you return. Off set Paul. I did an hour's work, and then tackled the house work. I did it beautiful: the house was a picture, it resplended of propriety. Presently Mr. Moors' Andrew rode up; I heard the doctor was at the Forest House and sent a note to him; and when he came, I heard my wife telling him she had been in bed all day, and that was why the house was so dirty! Was it grateful? Was it politic? Was it TRUE?—Enough! In the interval, up marched little L. S., one of my neighbours, all in his Sunday white linens; made a fine salute, and demanded the key of the kitchen in German and English. And he cooked dinner for us, like a little man, and had it on the table and the coffee ready by the hour. Paul had arranged me this surprise. Some time later, Paul returned himself with a fresh surprise on hand; he was almost sober; nothing but a hazy eye distinguished him from Paul of the week days: *vivat!*

On the evening I cannot dwell. All the horses got out of the paddock, went across, and smashed my neighbour's garden into a big hole. How little the amateur conceives a farmer's troubles. I went out at once with a lantern, staked up a gap in the hedge, was kicked at by a chestnut mare, who straightway took to the bush; and came back. A little after, they had found another gap, and the crowd were all abroad again. What has happened to our own garden nobody yet knows.

Fanny had a fair night, and we are both tolerable this morning, only the yoke of correspondence lies on me heavy. I beg you will let this go on to my mother. I got such a good start in your letter, that I kept on at it, and I have neither time nor energy for more.—Yours ever, R. L. S.

Something new.—I was called from my letters by the voice of Mr. ——, who had just come up with a load of wood, roaring, "Henry! Henry! Bring six boys!" I saw there was something wrong, and ran out. The cart, half unloaded, had upset with the mare in the shafts; she was all cramped together and all tangled up in harness and cargo, the off shaft pushing her over, the carter holding her up by main strength, and right along-side of her —where she must fall if she went down—a deadly stick of a tree like a lance. I could not but admire the wisdom and faith of this great brute; I never saw the riding-horse that would not have lost its life in such a situation; but the cart-elephant patiently waited and was saved. It was a stirring three minutes, I can tell you.

I forgot in talking of Saturday to tell of one incident which will particularly interest my mother. I met Dr. Davis from Savaii, and had an age-long talk about Edinburgh folk; it was very pleasant. He has been studying in Edinburgh, along with his son; a pretty relation. He told me he knew nobody but college people: "I was altogether a student," he said with glee. He seems full of cheerfulness and thick-set energy. I feel as if I could put him in a novel with effect; and ten to one, if I know more of him, the image will be only blurred.

Tuesday, Dec. 2nd.—I should have told you yesterday that all my boys were got up for their work in moustaches and side-whiskers of some sort of blacking—I suppose wood-ash. It was a sight of joy to see them return at night, axe on shoulder, feigning to march like soldiers, a choragus with a loud voice singing out, "March—step! March—step!" in imperfect recollection of some drill.

R. L. S.

To E. L. Burlingame

The intention here announced was only carried out to the extent of finishing one paper, *My First Book*, and beginning a few others—

Genesis of the Master of Ballantrae, Rosa Quo Locorum, etc.; see Edinburgh edition, *Miscellanies*, vol. iv. The "long experience of gambling places" is a phrase which must not be misunderstood. Stevenson loved risk to life and limb, but hated gambling for money, and had known the tables only as a looker-on during holiday or invalid travels as a boy and young man. "Tamate" is the native (Rarotongan) word for trader, used especially as a name for the famous missionary pioneer, the Rev. James Chalmers, for whom Stevenson had an unbounded respect.

[*Vailima, December* 1890.]

MY DEAR BURLINGAME,—By some diabolical accident, I have mislaid your last. What was in it? I know not, and here I am caught unexpectedly by the American mail, a week earlier than by computation. The computation, not the mail, is supposed to be in error. The vols. of Scribner's have arrived, and present a noble appearance in my house, which is not a noble structure at present. But by autumn we hope to be sprawling in our verandah, twelve feet, sir, by eighty-eight in front, and seventy-two on the flank; view of the sea and mountains, sunrise, moonrise, and the German fleet at anchor three miles away in Apia harbour. I hope some day to offer you a bowl of kava there, or a slice of a pine-apple, or some lemonade from my own hedge. "I know a hedge where the lemons grow"—*Shakespeare*. My house at this moment smells of them strong; and the rain, which a while ago roared there, now rings in minute drops upon the iron roof. I have no *Wrecker* for you this mail, other things having engaged me. I was on the whole rather relieved you did not vote for regular papers, as I feared the traces. It is my design from time to time to write a paper of a reminiscential (beastly word) description; some of them I could scarce publish from different considerations; but some of them—for instance, my long experience of gambling places—Homburg, Wiesbaden, Baden-Baden, old Monaco, and new Monte Carlo—would make good magazine padding, if I got the stuff handled the right way. I never could fathom why verse was put in magazines; it has something to do with the making-up, has it not? I

am scribbling a lot just now; if you are taken badly that way, apply to the South Seas. I could send you some, I believe, anyway, only none of it is thoroughly ripe. If you have kept back the volume of ballads, I'll soon make it of a respectable size if this fit continue. By the next mail you may expect some more *Wrecker*, or I shall be displeased. Probably no more than a chapter, however, for it is a hard one, and I am denuded of my proofs, my collaborator having walked away with them to England; hence some trouble in catching the just note.

I am a mere farmer: my talk, which would scarce interest you on Broadway, is all of fuafua and tuitui and black boys, and planting and weeding, and axes and cutlasses; my hands are covered with blisters and full of thorns; letters are, doubtless, a fine thing, so are beer and skittles, but give me farmering in the tropics for real interest. Life goes in enchantment; I come home to find I am late for dinner; and when I go to bed at night, I could cry for the weariness of my loins and thighs. Do not speak to me of vexation, the life brims with it, but with living interest fairly.

Christmas I go to Auckland, to meet Tamate, the New Guinea missionary, a man I love. The rest of my life is a prospect of much rain, much weeding and making of paths, a little letters, and devilish little to eat.—I am, my dear Burlingame, with messages to all whom it may concern, very sincerely yours,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

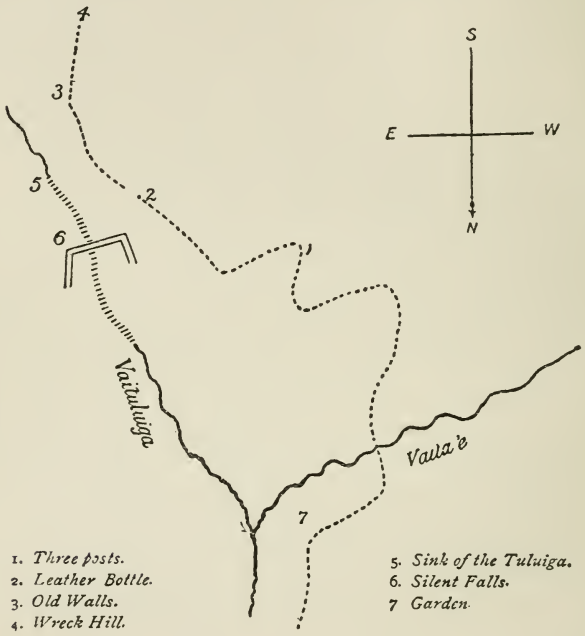
To Sidney Colvin

[*Vailima*] *Monday, twenty-somethingth of December* 1890.

MY DEAR COLVIN,—I do not say my Jack is anything extraordinary; he is only an island horse; and the profane might call him a Punch; and his face is like a

donkey's; and natives have ridden him, and he has no mouth in consequence, and occasionally shies. But his merits are equally surprising; and I don't think I should ever have known Jack's merits if I had not been riding up of late on moonless nights. Jack is a bit of a dandy; he loves to misbehave in a gallant manner, above all on Apia Street, and when I stop to speak to people, they say (Dr. Stuebel the German consul said about three days ago), "O what a wild horse! it cannot be safe to ride him." Such a remark is Jack's reward, and represents his ideal of fame. Now when I start out of Apia on a dark night, you should see my changed horse; at a fast steady walk, with his head down, and sometimes his nose to the ground—when he wants to do that, he asks for his head with a little eloquent polite movement indescribable—he climbs the long ascent and threads the darkest of the wood. The first night I came it was starry; and it was singular to see the starlight drip down into the crypt of the wood, and shine in the open end of the road, as bright as moonlight at home; but the crypt itself was proof, blackness lived in it. The next night it was raining. We left the lights of Apia and passed into limbo. Jack finds a way for himself, but he does not calculate for my height above the saddle; and I am directed forward, all braced up for a crouch and holding my switch upright in front of me. It is curiously interesting. In the forest, the dead wood is phosphorescent; some nights the whole ground is strewn with it, so that it seems like a grating over a pale hell; doubtless this is one of the things that feed the night fears of the natives; and I am free to confess that in a night of trackless darkness where all else is void, these pallid *ignes suppositi* have a fantastic appearance, rather bogey even. One night, when it was very dark, a man had put out a little lantern by the wayside to show the entrance to his ground. I saw the light, as I thought, far ahead, and supposed it was a pedestrian coming to meet me; I was quite taken by

surprise when it struck in my face and passed behind me. Jack saw it, and he was appalled ; do you think he thought of shying ? No, sir, not in the dark ; in the dark Jack knows he is on duty ; and he went past that lantern steady and swift ; only, as he went, he groaned and shuddered.



For about 2500 of Jack's steps we only passed one house —that where the lantern was ; and about 1500 of these are in the darkness of the pit. But now the moon is on tap again, and the roads lighted.

I have been exploring up the Vaituluiga ; see your map. It comes down a wonderful fine glen ; at least 200 feet of cliffs on either hand, winding like a corkscrew, great forest trees filling it. At the top there ought to be a fine double fall ; but the stream evades it by a fault and

passes underground. Above the fall it runs (at this season) full and very gaily in a shallow valley, some hundred yards before the head of the glen. Its course is seen full of grasses, like a flooded meadow ; that is the sink ! beyond the grave of the grasses, the bed lies dry. Near this upper part there is a great show of ruinous pig-walls ; a village must have stood near by.

To walk from our house to Wreck Hill (when the path is buried in fallen trees) takes one about half an hour, I think ; to return, not more than twenty minutes ; I dare say fifteen. Hence I should guess it was three-quarters of a mile. I had meant to join on my explorations passing eastward by the sink ; but, Lord ! how it rains.

Later.—I went out this morning with a pocket compass and walked in a varying direction, perhaps on an average S. by W., 1754 paces. Then I struck into the bush, N.W. by N., hoping to strike the Vaituluiga above the falls. Now I have it plotted out I see I should have gone W. or even W. by S. ; but it is not easy to guess. For 600 weary paces I struggled through the bush, and then came on the stream below the gorge, where it was comparatively easy to get down to it. In the place where I struck it, it made cascades about a little isle, and was running about N.E., 20 to 30 feet wide, as deep as to my knee, and piercing cold. I tried to follow it down, and keep the run of its direction and my paces ; but when I was wading to the knees and the waist in mud, poison brush, and rotted wood, bound hand and foot in lianas, shovelled unceremoniously off the one shore and driven to try my luck upon the other—I saw I should have hard enough work to get my body down, if my mind rested. It was a damnable walk ; certainly not half a mile as the crow flies, but a real bucketer for hardship. Once I had to pass the stream where it flowed between banks about three feet high. To get the easier down, I swung myself by a wild-cocoanut—(so called, it bears bunches of scarlet nutlets)—which grew upon the brink. As I so swung, I

received a crack on the head that knocked me all abroad. Impossible to guess what tree had taken a shy at me. So many towered above, one over the other, and the missile, whatever it was, dropped in the stream and was gone before I had recovered my wits. (I scarce know what I write, so hideous a Niagara of rain roars, shouts, and demonizes on the iron roof—it is pitch dark too—the lamp lit at 5!) It was a blessed thing when I struck my own road; and I got home, neat for lunch time, one of the most wonderful mud statues ever witnessed. In the afternoon I tried again, going up the other path by the garden, but was early drowned out; came home, plotted out what I had done, and then wrote this truck to you.

Fanny has been quite ill with ear-ache. She won't go,[1] hating the sea at this wild season; I don't like to leave her; so it drones on, steamer after steamer, and I guess it'll end by no one going at all. She is in a dreadful misfortune at this hour; a case of kerosene having burst in the kitchen. A little while ago it was the carpenter's horse that trod in a nest of fourteen eggs, and made an omelette of our hopes. The farmer's lot is not a happy one. And it looks like some real uncompromising bad weather too. I wish Fanny's ear were well. Think of parties in Monuments! think of me in Skerryvore, and now of this. It don't look like a part of the same universe to me. Work is quite laid aside; I have worked myself right out.

Christmas Eve.—Yesterday, who could write? My wife near crazy with ear-ache; the rain descending in white crystal rods and playing hell's tattoo, like a *tutti* of battering rams, on our sheet-iron roof; the wind passing high overhead with a strange dumb mutter, or striking us full, so that all the huge trees in the paddock cried aloud, and wrung their hands, and brandished their vast arms. The horses stood in the shed like things stupid. The sea and

[1] On a projected expedition to Sydney.

the flagship lying on the jaws of the bay vanished in sheer rain. All day it lasted; I locked up my papers in the iron box, in case it was a hurricane, and the house might go. We went to bed with mighty uncertain feelings; far more than on shipboard, where you have only drowning ahead—whereas here you have a smash of beams, a shower of sheet-iron, and a blind race in the dark and through a whirlwind for the shelter of an unfinished stable—and my wife with ear-ache! Well, well, this morning, we had word from Apia; a hurricane was looked for, the ships were to leave the bay by 10 A.M.; it is now 3.30, and the flagship is still a fixture, and the wind round in the blessed east, so I suppose the danger is over. But heaven is still laden; the day dim, with frequent rattling bucketfuls of rain; and just this moment (as I write) a squall went overhead, scarce striking us, with that singular, solemn noise of its passage, which is to me dreadful. I have always feared the sound of wind beyond everything. In my hell it would always blow a gale.

I have been all day correcting proofs, and making out a new plan for our house. The other was too dear to be built now, and it was a hard task to make a smaller house that would suffice for the present, and not be a mere waste of money in the future. I believe I have succeeded; I have taken care of my study anyway.

Two favours I want to ask of you. First, I wish you to get *Pioneering in New Guinea*, by J. Chalmers. It's a missionary book, and has less pretensions to be literature than Spurgeon's sermons. Yet I think even through that, you will see some of the traits of the hero that wrote it; a man that took me fairly by storm for the most attractive, simple, brave, and interesting man in the whole Pacific. He is away now to go up the Fly River; a desperate venture, it is thought; he is quite a Livingstone card.

Second, try and keep yourself free next winter; and if my means can be stretched so far, I'll come to Egypt

and we'll meet at Shepheard's Hotel, and you'll put me in my place, which I stand in need of badly by this time. Lord, what bully times! I suppose I'll come per British Asia, or whatever you call it, and avoid all cold, and might be in Egypt about November as ever was—eleven months from now or rather less. But do not let us count our chickens.

Last night three piglings were stolen from one of our pig-pens. The great Lafaele appeared to my wife uneasy, so she engaged him in conversation on the subject, and played upon him the following engaging trick. You advance your two forefingers towards the sitter's eyes; he closes them, whereupon you substitute (on his eyelids) the fore and middle fingers of the left hand; and with your right (which he supposes engaged) you tap him on the head and back. When you let him open his eyes, he sees you withdrawing the two forefingers. "What that?" asked Lafaele. "My devil," says Fanny. "I wake um, my devil. All right now. He go catch the man that catch my pig." About an hour afterwards, Lafaele came for further particulars. "O, all right," my wife says. "By and by, that man he sleep, devil go sleep same place. By and by, that man plenty sick. I no care. What for he take my pig?" Lafaele cares plenty; I don't think he is the man, though he may be; but he knows him, and most likely will eat some of that pig to-night. He will not eat with relish.

Saturday, 27*th*.—It cleared up suddenly after dinner, and my wife and I saddled up and off to Apia, whence we did not return till yesterday morning. Christmas Day I wish you could have seen our party at table. H. J. Moors at one end with my wife, I at the other with Mrs. M., between us two native women, Carruthers the lawyer, Moors's two shop-boys—Walters and A. M. the quadroon —and the guests of the evening, Shirley Baker, the defamed and much-accused man of Tonga, and his son, with the artificial joint to his arm—where the assassins shot him

in shooting at his father. Baker's appearance is not unlike John Bull on a cartoon; he is highly interesting to speak to, as I had expected; I found he and I had many common interests, and were engaged in puzzling over many of the same difficulties. After dinner it was quite pretty to see our Christmas party, it was so easily pleased and prettily behaved. In the morning I should say I had been to lunch at the German consulate, where I had as usual a very pleasant time. I shall miss Dr. Stuebel[1] much when he leaves, and when Adams and Lafarge go also, it will be a great blow. I am getting spoiled with all this good society.

On Friday morning, I had to be at my house affairs before seven; and they kept me in Apia till past ten, disputing, and consulting about brick and stone and native and hydraulic lime, and cement and sand, and all sorts of otiose details about the chimney—just what I fled from in my father's office twenty years ago; I should have made a languid engineer. Rode up with the carpenter. Ah, my wicked Jack! on Christmas Eve, as I was taking the saddle bag off, he kicked at me, and fetched me too, right on the shin. On Friday, being annoyed at the carpenter's horse having a longer trot, he uttered a shrill cry and tried to bite him! Alas, alas, these are like old days; my dear Jack is a Bogue,[2] but I cannot strangle Jack into submission.

I have given up the big house for just now; we go ahead right away with a small one, which should be ready in two months, and I suppose will suffice for just now.

O I know I haven't told you about our *aitu*, have I? It is a lady, *aitu fafine:* she lives on the mountain-side; her presence is heralded by the sound of a gust of wind; a sound very common in the high woods; when she

[1] See *A Footnote to History* for more in praise of Dr. Stuebel, and of his exceptional deserts among white officials in Samoa.

[2] One of the many aliases of the wicked Skye-terrier of Hyères, Davos, and Bournemouth days, celebrated in the essay *On the Character of Dogs.*

catches you, I do not know what happens; but in practice she is avoided, so I suppose she does more than pass the time of day. The great *aitu Saumai-afe* was once a living woman, and became an *aitu*, no one understands how; she lives in a stream at the well-head, her hair is red, she appears as a lovely young lady, her bust particularly admired, to handsome young men; these die, her love being fatal;—as a handsome youth she has been known to court damsels with the like result, but this is very rare; as an old crone she goes about and asks for water, and woe to them who are uncivil! *Saumai-afe* means literally, "Come here a thousand!" A good name for a lady of her manners. My *aitu fafine* does not seem to be in the same line of business. It is unsafe to be a handsome youth in Samoa; a young man died from her favours last month—so we said on this side of the island; on the other, where he died, it was not so certain. I, for one, blame it on Madam *Saumai-afe* without hesitation.

Example of the farmer's sorrows. I slipped out on the balcony a moment ago. It is a lovely morning, cloudless, smoking hot, the breeze not yet arisen. Looking west, in front of our new house, I saw two heads of Indian corn wagging, and the rest and all nature stock still. As I looked, one of the stalks subsided and disappeared. I dashed out to the rescue; two small pigs were deep in the grass—quite hid till within a few yards—gently but swiftly demolishing my harvest. Never be a farmer.

12.30 *p.m.*—I while away the moments of digestion by drawing you a faithful picture of my morning. When I had done writing as above it was time to clean our house. When I am working, it falls on my wife alone, but to-day we had it between us; she did the bedroom, I the sitting-room, in fifty-seven minutes of really most unpalatable labour. Then I changed every stitch, for I was wet through, and sat down and played on my pipe till dinner was ready, mighty pleased to be in a mildly habitable spot once more. The house had been neglected for near a week,

and was a hideous spot; my wife's ear and our visit to Apia being the causes: our Paul we prefer not to see upon that theatre, and God knows he has plenty to do elsewhere.

I am glad to look out of my back door and see the boys smoothing the foundations of the new house; this is all very jolly, but six months of it has satisfied me; we have too many things for such close quarters; to work in the midst of all the myriad misfortunes of the planter's life, seated in a Dyonisius' (can't spell him) ear, whence I catch every complaint, mishap and contention, is besides the devil; and the hope of a cave of my own inspires me with lust. O to be able to shut my own door and make my own confusion! O to have the brown paper and the matches and "make a hell of my own" once more!

I do not bother you with all my troubles in these outpourings; the troubles of the farmer are inspiriting—they are like difficulties out hunting—a fellow rages at the time and rejoices to recall and to commemorate them. My troubles have been financial. It is hard to arrange wisely interests so distributed. America, England, Samoa, Sydney, everywhere I have an end of liability hanging out and some shelf of credit hard by; and to juggle all these and build a dwelling-place here, and check expense —a thing I am ill fitted for—you can conceive what a nightmare it is at times. Then God knows I have not been idle. But since *The Master* nothing has come to raise any coins. I believe the springs are dry at home, and now I am worked out, and can no more at all. A holiday is required.

Dec. 28th.—I have got unexpectedly to work again, and feel quite dandy. Good-bye. R. L. S.

To Henry James

Mr. Lafarge the artist and Mr. Henry Adams the historian have been mentioned already. The pinch in the matter of eatables only

lasted for a little while, until Mrs. Stevenson had taken her bearings and made her arrangements in the matter of marketing, etc.

Vailima, Apia, Samoa, December 29th, 1890.

MY DEAR HENRY JAMES,—It is terrible how little everybody writes, and how much of that little disappears in the capacious maw of the Post Office. Many letters, both from and to me, I now know to have been lost in transit: my eye is on the Sydney Post Office, a large ungainly structure with a tower, as being not a hundred miles from the scene of disappearance; but then I have no proof. The *Tragic Muse* you announced to me as coming; I had already ordered it from a Sydney bookseller: about two months ago he advised me that his copy was in the post; and I am still tragically museless.

News, news, news. What do we know of yours? What do you care for ours? We are in the midst of the rainy season, and dwell among alarms of hurricanes, in a very unsafe little two-storied wooden box 650 feet above and about three miles from the sea-beach. Behind us, till the other slope of the island, desert forest, peaks, and loud torrents; in front green slopes to the sea, some fifty miles of which we dominate. We see the ships as they go out and in to the dangerous roadstead of Apia; and if they lie far out, we can even see their topmasts while they are at anchor. Of sounds of men, beyond those of our own labourers, there reach us, at very long intervals, salutes from the warships in harbour, the bell of the cathedral church, and the low of the conch-shell calling the labour boys on the German plantations. Yesterday, which was Sunday—the *quantième* is most likely erroneous; you can now correct it—we had a visitor—Baker of Tonga. Heard you ever of him? He is a great man here: he is accused of theft, rape, judicial murder, private poisoning, abortion, misappropriation of public moneys — oddly enough, not forgery, nor arson; you would be amused if you knew how thick the accusations fly in this South Sea world. I make no doubt my own character is

something illustrious; or if not yet, there is a good time coming.

But all our resources have not of late been Pacific. We have had enlightened society: Lafarge the painter, and your friend Henry Adams: a great privilege—would it might endure. I would go oftener to see them, but the place is awkward to reach on horseback. I had to swim my horse the last time I went to dinner; and as I have not yet returned the clothes I had to borrow, I dare not return in the same plight: it seems inevitable—as soon as the wash comes in, I plump straight into the American consul's shirt or trousers! They, I believe, would come oftener to see me but for the horrid doubt that weighs upon our commissariat department; we have *often* almost nothing to eat; a guest would simply break the bank; my wife and I have dined on one avocado pear; I have several times dined on hard bread and onions. What would you do with a guest at such narrow seasons?—eat him? or serve up a labour boy fricasseed?

Work? work is now arrested, but I have written, I should think, about thirty chapters of the South Sea book; they will all want rehandling, I dare say. Gracious, what a strain is a long book! The time it took me to design this volume, before I could dream of putting pen to paper, was excessive; and then think of writing a book of travels on the spot, when I am continually extending my information, revising my opinions, and seeing the most finely finished portions of my work come part by part in pieces. Very soon I shall have no opinions left. And without an opinion, how to string artistically vast accumulations of fact? Darwin said no one could observe without a theory; I suppose he was right; 'tis a fine point of metaphysic; but I will take my oath, no man can write without one—at least the way he would like to, and my theories melt, melt, melt, and as they melt the thaw-waters wash down my writing, and leave unideal tracts—wastes instead of cultivated farms.

Kipling is by far the most promising young man who has appeared since—ahem—I appeared. He amazes me by his precocity and various endowment. But he alarms me by his copiousness and haste. He should shield his fire with both hands " and draw up all his strength and sweetness in one ball." (" Draw all his strength and all His sweetness up into one ball " ? I cannot remember Marvell's words.) So the critics have been saying to me: but I was never capable of—and surely never guilty of—such a debauch of production. At this rate his works will soon fill the habitable globe; and surely he was armed for better conflicts than these succinct sketches and flying leaves of verse ? I look on, I admire, I rejoice for myself; but in a kind of ambition we all have for our tongue and literature I am wounded. If I had this man's fertility and courage, it seems to me I could heave a pyramid.

Well, we begin to be the old fogies now; and it was high time *something* rose to take our places. Certainly Kipling has the gifts; the fairy godmothers were all tipsy at his christening: what will he do with them ?

Good-bye, my dear James; find an hour to write to us, and register your letter.—Yours affectionately,

R. L. S.

To Rudyard Kipling

In 1890, on first becoming acquainted with Mr. Kipling's *Soldiers Three*, Stevenson had written off his congratulations red-hot. " Well and indeed, Mr. Mulvaney," so ran the first sentences of his note, " but it's as good as meat to meet in with you, sir. They tell me it was a man of the name of Kipling made ye; but indeed and they can't fool me; it was the Lord God Almighty that made you." Taking the cue thus offered, Mr. Kipling had written back in the character of his own Irishman, Thomas Mulvaney, addressing Stevenson's Highlander, Alan Breck Stewart. In the following letter, which belongs to an uncertain date in 1891, Alan Breck is made to reply. " The gentleman I now serve with " means, of course, R. L. S. himself.

[*Vailima*, 1891.]

sir,—I cannot call to mind having written you, but I am so throng with occupation this may have fallen

aside. I never heard tell I had any friends in Ireland, and I am led to understand you are come of no considerable family. The gentleman I now serve with assures me, however, you are a very pretty fellow and your letter deserves to be remarked. It's true he is himself a man of a very low descent upon the one side; though upon the other he counts cousinship with a gentleman, my very good friend, the late Mr. Balfour of the Shaws, in the Lothian; which I should be wanting in good fellowship to forget. He tells me besides you are a man of your hands; I am not informed of your weapon; but if all be true it sticks in my mind I would be ready to make exception in your favour, and meet you like one gentleman with another. I suppose this'll be your purpose in your favour, which I could very ill make out; it's one I would be sweir to baulk you of. It seems, Mr. McIlvaine, which I take to be your name, you are in the household of a gentleman of the name of Coupling: for whom my friend is very much engaged. The distances being very uncommodious, I think it will be maybe better if we leave it to these two to settle all that's necessary to honour. I would have you to take heed it's a very unusual condescension on my part, that bear a King's name; and for the matter of that I think shame to be mingled with a person of the name of Coupling, which is doubtless a very good house but one I never heard tell of, any more than Stevenson. But your purpose being laudable, I would be sorry (as the word goes) to cut off my nose to spite my face.—I am, Sir, your humble servant,

A. STEWART,
Chevalier de St. Louis.

To Mr. M'Ilvaine,
Gentleman Private in a foot regiment,
under cover to Mr. Coupling.

He has read me some of your Barrack Room Ballants, which are not of so noble a strain as some of mine in the

Gaelic, but I could set some of them to the pipes if this rencounter goes as it's to be desired. Let's first, as I understand you to move, do each other this rational courtesy; and if either will survive, we may grow better acquaint. For your tastes for what's martial and for poetry agree with mine. A. S.

To Sidney Colvin

This is the first appearance in Stevenson's letters of the Swedish Chief Justice of Samoa, Mr. Conrad Cedercrantz, of whom we shall hear enough and more than enough in the sequel.

S.S. Lübeck, *between Apia and Sydney, Jan.* 17*th*, 1891.

MY DEAR COLVIN,—The Faamasino Sili, or Chief Justice, to speak your low language, has arrived. I had ridden down with Henry and Lafaele; the sun was down, the night was close at hand, so we rode fast; just as I came to the corner of the road before Apia, I heard a gun fire; and lo, there was a great crowd at the end of the pier, and the troops out, and a chief or two in the height of Samoa finery, and Seumanu coming in his boat (the oarsmen all in uniform), bringing the Faamasino Sili sure enough. It was lucky he was no longer; the natives would not have waited many weeks. But think of it, as I sat in the saddle at the outside of the crowd (looking, the English consul said, as if I were commanding the manœuvres), I was nearly knocked down by a stampede of the three consuls; they had been waiting their guest at the Matafele end, and some wretched intrigue among the whites had brought him to Apia, and the consuls had to run all the length of the town and come too late.

The next day was a long one; I was at a marriage of Gurr the banker to Fanua, the virgin of Apia. Bride and bridesmaids were all in the old high dress; the ladies were all native; the men, with the exception of Seumanu, all white.

It was quite a pleasant party, and while we were writing, we had a bird's-eye view of the public reception of the Chief Justice. The best part of it were some natives in war array; with blacked faces, turbans, tapa kilts, and guns, they looked very manly and purposelike. No, the best part was poor old drunken Joe, the Portuguese boatman, who seemed to think himself specially charged with the reception, and ended by falling on his knees before the Chief Justice on the end of the pier and in full view of the whole town and bay. The natives pelted him with rotten bananas; how the Chief Justice took it I was too far off to see; but it was highly absurd.

I have commemorated my genial hopes for the regimen of the Faamasino Sili in the following canine verses, which, if you at all guess how to read them, are very pretty in movement, and (unless he be a mighty good man) too true in sense.

We're quarrelling, the villages, we've beaten the wooden drums,
Sa femisai o nu'u, sa taia o pate,
Is confounded thereby the justice,
Ua atuatuvale a le faamasino e,
The chief justice, the terrified justice,
Le faamasino sili, le faamasino se,
Is on the point of running away the justice,
O le a solasola le faamasino e,
The justice denied any influence, the terrified justice,
O le faamasino le ai a, le faamasino se,
O le a solasola le faamasino e.

Well, after this excursion into tongues that have never been alive—though I assure you we have one capital book in the language, a book of fables by an old missionary of the unpromising name of Pratt, which is simply the best and the most literary version of the fables known to me. I suppose I should except La Fontaine, but L. F.

takes a long time; these are brief as the books of our childhood, and full of wit and literary colour; and O, Colvin, what a tongue it would be to write, if one only knew it—and there were only readers. Its curse in common use is an incredible left-handed wordiness; but in the hands of a man like Pratt it is succinct as Latin, compact of long rolling polysyllables and little and often pithy particles, and for beauty of sound a dream. Listen, I quote from Pratt—this is good Samoan, not canine—

1 2 3 4 1
O le afa, ua taalili ai le ulu vao, ua pa mai le faititili.

1 almost *wa*, 2 the two *a's* just distinguished, 3 the *ai* is practically suffixed to the verb, 4 almost *vow*. The excursion has prolonged itself.

I started by the *Lübeck* to meet Lloyd and my mother; there were many reasons for and against; the main reason against was the leaving of Fanny alone in her blessed cabin, which has been somewhat remedied by my carter, Mr. ——, putting up in the stable and messing with her; but perhaps desire of change decided me not well, though I do think I ought to see an oculist, being very blind indeed, and sometimes unable to read. Anyway I left, the only cabin passenger, four and a kid in the second cabin, and a dear voyage it had like to have proved. Close to Fiji (choose a worse place on the map) we broke our shaft early one morning; and when or where we might expect to fetch land or meet with any ship, I would like you to tell me. The Pacific is absolutely desert. I have sailed there now some years; and scarce ever seen a ship except in port or close by; I think twice. It was the hurricane season besides, and hurricane waters. Well, our chief engineer got the shaft—it was the middle crank shaft—mended; thrice it was mended, and twice broke down; but now keeps up—only we dare not stop, for it is almost impossible to start again. The captain in the

meanwhile crowded her with sail; fifteen sails in all, every stay being gratified with a stay-sail, a boat-boom sent aloft for a maintop-gallant yard, and the derrick of a crane brought in service as bowsprit. All the time we have had a fine, fair wind and a smooth sea; to-day at noon our run was 203 miles (if you please!), and we are within some 360 miles of Sydney. Probably there has never been a more gallant success; and I can say honestly it was well worked for. No flurry, no high words, no long faces; only hard work and honest thought; a pleasant, manly business to be present at. All the chances were we might have been six weeks—ay, or three months at sea—or never turned up at all, and now it looks as though we should reach our destination some five days too late.

To Marcel Schwob

Sydney, January 19th, 1891.

MY DEAR SIR,—*Sapristi, comme vous y allez!* Richard III. and Dumas, with all my heart: but not Hamlet. Hamlet is great literature; Richard III. a big, black, gross, sprawling melodrama, writ with infinite spirit but with no refinement or philosophy by a man who had the world, himself, mankind, and his trade still to learn. I prefer the Vicomte de Bragelonne to Richard III.; it is better done of its kind: I simply do not mention the Vicomte in the same part of the building with Hamlet, or Lear, or Othello, or any of those masterpieces that Shakespeare survived to give us.

Also, *comme vous y allez* in my commendation! I fear my *solide éducation classique* had best be described, like Shakespeare's, as "little Latin and no Greek" and I was educated, let me inform you, for an engineer. I shall tell my bookseller to send you a copy of *Memories and Portraits*, where you will see something of my descent and education, as it was, and hear me at length on my dear Vicomte.

I give you permission gladly to take your choice out of my works, and translate what you shall prefer, too much honoured that so clever a young man should think it worth the pains. My own choice would lie between *Kidnapped* and the *Master of Ballantrae*. Should you choose the latter, pray do not let Mrs. Henry thrust the sword up to the hilt in the frozen ground—one of my inconceivable blunders, an exaggeration to stagger Hugo. Say "she sought to thrust it in the ground." In both these works you should be prepared for Scotticisms used deliberately.

I fear my stepson will not have found time to get to Paris; he was overwhelmed with occupation, and is already on his voyage back. We live here in a beautiful land, amid a beautiful and interesting people. The life is still very hard: my wife and I live in a two-roomed cottage, about three miles and six hundred and fifty feet above the sea; we have had to make the road to it; our supplies are very imperfect; in the wild weather of this (the hurricane) season we have much discomfort: one night the wind blew in our house so outrageously that we must sit in the dark; and as the sound of the rain on the roof made speech inaudible, you may imagine we found the evening long. All these things, however, are pleasant to me. You say *l'artiste inconscient* set off to travel: you do not divide me right. 0·6 of me is artist; 0·4, adventurer. First, I suppose, come letters; then adventure; and since I have indulged the second part, I think the formula begins to change: 0·55 of an artist, 0·45 of the adventurer were nearer true. And if it had not been for my small strength, I might have been a different man in all things.

Whatever you do, do not neglect to send me what you publish on Villon: I look forward to that with lively interest. I have no photograph at hand, but I will send one when I can. It would be kind if you would do the like, for I do not see much chance of our meeting in the flesh: and a name, and a handwriting, and an address,

and even a style? I know about as much of Tacitus, and more of Horace; it is not enough between contemporaries, such as we still are. I have just remembered another of my books, which I re-read the other day, and thought in places good—*Prince Otto*. It is not as good as either of the others; but it has one recommendation—it has female parts, so it might perhaps please better in France.

I will ask Chatto to send you, then—*Prince Otto*, *Memories and Portraits*, *Underwoods*, and *Ballads*, none of which you seem to have seen. They will be too late for the New Year: let them be an Easter present.

You must translate me soon; you will soon have better to do than to transvase the work of others.—Yours very truly, ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON,

With the worst pen in the South Pacific.

TO CHARLES BAXTER

Stevenson had been indignant with an old friend at Edinburgh, who had received much kindness from his mother, for neglecting to call on her after her return from her wanderings in the Pacific.

S.S. Lübeck, *at sea* [*on the return voyage from Sydney, February* 1891].

MY DEAR CHARLES,—Perhaps in my old days I do grow irascible; "the old man virulent" has long been my pet name for myself. Well, the temper is at least all gone now; time is good at lowering these distemperatures; far better is a sharp sickness, and I am just (and scarce) afoot again after a smoking hot little malady at Sydney. And the temper being gone, I still think the same. . . . We have not our parents for ever; we are never very good to them; when they go and we have lost our front-file man we begin to feel all our neglects mighty sensibly. I propose a proposal. My mother is here on board with me; to-day for once I mean to make her as happy as I am able, and to do that which I know she likes. You, on the other

hand, go and see your father, and do ditto, and give him a real good hour or two. We shall both be glad hereafter. —Yours ever, R. L. S.

To Sidney Colvin

Stevenson had been sharply ailing as usual at Sydney, and was now on his way back. Having received proofs of some of his *South Sea* chapters, he had begun to realise that they were not what he had hoped to make them.

[*On Board Ship between Sydney and Apia, February* 1891.]

MY DEAR COLVIN,—The *Janet Nicoll* stuff was rather worse than I had looked for; you have picked out all that is fit to stand, bar two others (which I don't dislike) —the Port of Entry and the House of Temoana; that is for a present opinion; I may condemn these also ere I have done. By this time you should have another Marquesan letter, the worst of the lot, I think; and seven Paumotu letters, which are not far out of the vein, as I wish it; I am in hopes the Hawaiian stuff is better yet: time will show, and time will make perfect. Is something of this sort practicable for the dedication?

TERRA MARIQUE
PER PERICULA PER ARDUA
AMICAE COMITI
D.D.
AMANS VIATOR

'Tis a first shot concocted this morning in my berth: I had always before been trying it in English, which insisted on being either insignificant or fulsome: I cannot think of a better word than *comes*, there being not the shadow of a Latin book on board; yet sure there is some other. Then *viator* (though it *sounds* all right) is doubtful; it has too much, perhaps, the sense of wayfarer? Last,

will it mark sufficiently that I mean my wife? And first, how about blunders? I scarce wish it longer.

Have had a swingeing sharp attack in Sydney; beating the fields[1] for two nights, Saturday and Sunday. Wednesday was brought on board, *tel quel*, a wonderful wreck; and now, Wednesday week, am a good deal picked up, but yet not quite a Samson, being still groggy afoot and vague in the head. My chess, for instance, which is usually a pretty strong game, and defies all rivalry aboard, is vacillating, devoid of resource and observation, and hitherto not covered with customary laurels. As for work, it is impossible. We shall be in the saddle before long, no doubt, and the pen once more couched. You must not expect a letter under these circumstances, but be very thankful for a note. Once at Samoa, I shall try to resume my late excellent habits, and delight you with journals, you unaccustomed, I unaccustomed; but it is never too late to mend.

It is vastly annoying that I cannot go even to Sydney without an attack; and heaven knows my life was anodyne. I only once dined with anybody; at the club with Wise; worked all morning—a terrible dead pull; a month only produced the imperfect embryos of two chapters; lunched in the boarding-house, played on my pipe; went out and did some of my messages; dined at a French restaurant, and returned to play draughts, whist, or Van John with my family. This makes a cheery life after Samoa; but it isn't what you call burning the candle at both ends, is it? (It appears to me not one word of this letter will be legible by the time I am done with it, this dreadful ink rubs off.) I have a strange kind of novel under construction; it begins about 1660 and ends 1830, or perhaps I may continue it to 1875 or so, with another life. One, two, three, four, five, six generations, perhaps seven, figure therein; two of my old stories, "Delafield" and "Shovel," are incorporated; it is to be told in the third person, with

[1] *Battre les champs*, to wander in mind.

some of the brevity of history, some of the detail of romance. *The Shovels of Newton French* will be the name. The idea is an old one; it was brought to birth by an accident; a friend in the islands who picked up F. Jenkin,[1] read a part, and said: "Do you know, that's a strange book? I like it; I don't believe the public will; but I like it." He thought it was a novel! "Very well," said I, "we'll see whether the public will like it or not; they shall have the chance."—Yours ever, R. L. S.

To H. B. Baildon

The late Mr. H. Bellyse Baildon, for some time Lecturer on English Literature at the University of Vienna and afterwards at Dundee, had been an old schoolmate and fellow-aspirant in literature with Stevenson at Edinburgh. "Chalmers," of course, is the Rev. James Chalmers of Rarotonga and New Guinea already referred to above, the admirable missionary, explorer, and administrator, whom Stevenson sometimes expressed a desire to survive, for the sake only of writing his life.

Vailima, Upolu [*Spring* 1891].

MY DEAR BAILDON,—This is a real disappointment. It was so long since we had met, I was anxious to see where time had carried and stranded us. Last time we saw each other—it must have been all ten years ago, as we were new to the thirties—it was only for a moment, and now we're in the forties, and before very long we shall be in our graves. Sick and well, I have had a splendid life of it, grudge nothing, regret very little—and then only some little corners of misconduct for which I deserve hanging,

[1] *Memoir of Fleeming Jenkin*, by R. L. S., prefixed to *Papers Literary, Scientific, etc., by the late Fleeming Jenkin, F.R.S., LL.D.*; 2 vols. London, Longmans, 1887. The first chapters consist of a genealogical history of the family. This, to my mind one of the best works of R. L. S., has lately been separately reprinted, having long been accessible only in the Edinburgh and Pentland editions. Of *Delafield* I never heard; the plan of *Shovel*, which was to be in great part a story of the Peninsular War, had been sketched out and a few chapters written as long ago as the seventies.

and must infallibly be damned—and, take it all over, damnation and all, would hardly change with any man of my time, unless perhaps it were Gordon or our friend Chalmers: a man I admire for his virtues, love for his faults, and envy for the really A1 life he has, with everything heart—my heart, I mean—could wish. It is curious to think you will read this in the grey metropolis; go the first grey, east-windy day into the Caledonian Station, if it looks at all as it did of yore: I met Satan there. And then go and stand by the cross, and remember the other one—him that went down—my brother, Robert Fergusson. It is a pity you had not made me out, and seen me as patriarch and planter. I shall look forward to some record of your time with Chalmers: you can't weary me of that fellow, he is as big as a house and far bigger than any church, where no man warms his hands. Do you know anything of Thomson? Of A——, B——, C——, D——, E——, F——, at all? As I write C.'s name mustard rises in my nose; I have never forgiven that weak, amiable boy a little trick he played me when I could ill afford it: I mean that whenever I think of it, some of the old wrath kindles, not that I would hurt the poor soul, if I got the world with it. And Old X——? Is he still afloat? Harmless bark! I gather you ain't married yet, since your sister, to whom I ask to be remembered, goes with you. Did you see a silly tale, *John Nicholson's Predicament*,[1] or some such name, in which I made free with your home at Murrayfield? There is precious little sense in it, but it might amuse. Cassell's published it in a thing called *Yule-Tide* years ago, and nobody that ever I heard of read or has ever seen *Yule-Tide*. It is addressed to a class we never met—readers of Cassell's series and that class of conscientious chaff, and my tale was dull, though I don't recall that it was conscientious. Only, there's the house at Murrayfield and a dead body in it. Glad the *Ballads* amused you. They failed to entertain a coy

[1] *The Misadventures of John Nicholson.*

public, at which I wondered ; not that I set much account by my verses, which are the verses of Prosator ; but I do know how to tell a yarn, and two of the yarns are great. *Rahero* is for its length a perfect folk-tale : savage and yet fine, full of tailforemost morality, ancient as the granite rocks ; if the historian, not to say the politician, could get that yarn into his head, he would have learned some of his A B C. But the average man at home cannot understand antiquity ; he is sunk over the ears in Roman civilisation ; and a tale like that of *Rahero* falls on his ears inarticulate. The Spectator said there was no psychology in it ; that interested me much : my grandmother (as I used to call that able paper, and an able paper it is, and a fair one) cannot so much as observe the existence of savage psychology when it is put before it. I am at bottom a psychologist and ashamed of it ; the tale seized me one-third because of its picturesque features, two-thirds because of its astonishing psychology, and the Spectator says there's none. I am going on with a lot of island work, exulting in the knowledge of a new world, " a new created world " and new men ; and I am sure my income will DECLINE and FALL off ; for the effort of comprehension is death to the intelligent public, and sickness to the dull.

I do not know why I pester you with all this trash, above all as you deserve nothing. I give you my warm *talofa* (" my love to you," Samoan salutation). Write me again when the spirit moves you. And some day, if I still live, make out the trip again and let us hob-a-nob with our grey pows on my verandah.—Yours sincerely,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

TO SIDNEY COLVIN

The latter part of this letter was written in the course of an expedition on which Stevenson had been invited by the American Consul, Mr. Sewall, to the neighbouring island of Tutuila. Un-

luckily the letter breaks off short, and the only record of this trip occurs in the diary partly quoted in Mr. Balfour's *Life*, ch. xiv.

Vailima, Friday, March 19th [1891].

MY DEAR S. C.,—You probably expect that now I am back at Vailima I shall resume the practice of the diary letter. A good deal is changed. We are more; solitude does not attend me as before; the night is passed playing Van John for shells; and, what is not less important, I have just recovered from a severe illness, and am easily tired.

I will give you to-day. I sleep now in one of the lower rooms of the new house, where my wife has recently joined me. We have two beds, an empty case for a table, a chair, a tin basin, a bucket and a jug; next door in the dining-room, the carpenters camp on the floor, which is covered with their mosquito nets. Before the sun rises, at 5.45 or 5.50, Paul brings me tea, bread, and a couple of eggs; and by about six I am at work. I work in bed—my bed is of mats, no mattress, sheets, or filth—mats, a pillow, and a blanket—and put in some three hours. It was 9.5 this morning when I set off to the stream-side to my weeding; where I toiled, manuring the ground with the best enricher, human sweat, till the conch-shell was blown from our verandah at 10.30. At eleven we dine; about half-past twelve I tried (by exception) to work again, could make nothing on't, and by one was on my way to the weeding, where I wrought till three. Half-past five is our next meal, and I read Flaubert's Letters till the hour came round; dined, and then, Fanny having a cold, and I being tired, came over to my den in the unfinished house, where I now write to you, to the tune of the carpenters' voices, and by the light—I crave your pardon—by the twilight of three vile candles filtered through the medium of my mosquito bar. Bad ink being of the party, I write quite blindfold, and can only hope you may be granted to read that which I am unable to see while writing.

I said I was tired ; it is a mild phrase ; my back aches like toothache ; when I shut my eyes to sleep, I know I shall see before them—a phenomenon to which both Fanny and I are quite accustomed—endless vivid deeps of grass and weed, each plant particular and distinct, so that I shall lie inert in body, and transact for hours the mental part of my day business, choosing the noxious from the useful. And in my dreams I shall be hauling on recalcitrants, and suffering stings from nettles, stabs from citron thorns, fiery bites from ants, sickening resistances of mud and slime, evasions of slimy roots, dead weight of heat, sudden puffs of air, sudden starts from bird-calls in the contiguous forest—some mimicking my name, some laughter, some the signal of a whistle, and living over again at large the business of my day.

Though I write so little, I pass all my hours of field-work in continual converse and imaginary correspondence. I scarce pull up a weed, but I invent a sentence on the matter to yourself ; it does not get written ; *autant en emportent les vents ;* but the intent is there, and for me (in some sort) the companionship. To-day, for instance, we had a great talk. I was toiling, the sweat dripping from my nose, in the hot fit after a squall of rain : me-thought you asked me—frankly, was I happy. Happy (said I) ; I was only happy once ; that was at Hyères ; it came to an end from a variety of reasons, decline of health, change of place, increase of money, age with his stealing steps ; since then, as before then, I know not what it means. But I know pleasure still ; pleasure with a thousand faces, and none perfect, a thousand tongues all broken, a thousand hands, and all of them with scratching nails. High among these I place this delight of weeding out here alone by the garrulous water, under the silence of the high wood, broken by incongruous sounds of birds. And take my life all through, look at it fore and back, and upside down,—though I would very fain change myself —I would not change my circumstances, unless it were to

bring you here. And yet God knows perhaps this intercourse of writing serves as well; and I wonder, were you here indeed, would I commune so continually with the thought of you. I say "I wonder" for a form; I know, and I know I should not.

So far, and much further, the conversation went, while I groped in slime after viscous roots, nursing and sparing little spears of grass, and retreating (even with outcry) from the prod of the wild lime. I wonder if any one had ever the same attitude to Nature as I hold, and have held for so long? This business fascinates me like a tune or a passion; yet all the while I thrill with a strong distaste. The horror of the thing, objective and subjective, is always present to my mind; the horror of creeping things, a superstitious horror of the void and the powers about me, the horror of my own devastation and continual murders. The life of the plants comes through my finger-tips, their struggles go to my heart like supplications. I feel myself blood-boltered; then I look back on my cleared grass, and count myself an ally in a fair quarrel, and make stout my heart.

It is but a little while since I lay sick in Sydney, beating the fields about the navy and Dean Swift and Dryden's Latin hymns; judge if I love this reinvigorating climate, where I can already toil till my head swims and every string in the poor jumping Jack (as he now lies in bed) aches with a kind of yearning strain, difficult to suffer in quiescence.

As for my damned literature,[1] God knows what a business it is, grinding along without a scrap of inspiration or a note of style. But it has to be ground, and the mill grinds exceeding slowly though not particularly small. The last two chapters have taken me considerably over a month, and they are still beneath pity. This I cannot continue, time not sufficing; and the next will just have to be worse. All the good I can express is just this; some

[1] The South Sea Letters.

day, when style revisits me, they will be excellent matter to rewrite. Of course, my old cure of a change of work would probably answer, but I cannot take it now. The treadmill turns; and, with a kind of desperate cheerfulness, I mount the idle stair. I haven't the least anxiety about the book; unless I die, I shall find the time to make it good; but the Lord deliver me from the thought of the Letters! However, the Lord has other things on hand; and about six to-morrow, I shall resume the consideration practically, and face (as best I may) the fact of my incompetence and disaffection to the task. Toil I do not spare; but fortune refuses me success. We can do more, Whatever-his-name-was, we can deserve it. But my misdesert began long since, by the acceptation of a bargain quite unsuitable to all my methods.[1]

To-day I have had a queer experience. My carter has from the first been using my horses for his own ends; when I left for Sydney, I put him on his honour to cease, and my back was scarce turned ere he was forfeit. I have only been waiting to discharge him; and to-day an occasion arose. I am so much *the old man virulent*, so readily stumble into anger, that I gave a deal of consideration to my bearing, and decided at last to imitate that of the late ——. Whatever he might have to say, this eminently effective controversialist maintained a frozen demeanour and a jeering smile. The frozen demeanour is beyond my reach; but I could try the jeering smile; did so, perceived its efficacy, kept in consequence my temper, and got rid of my friend, myself composed and smiling still, he white and shaking like an aspen. He could explain everything; I said it did not interest me. He said he had enemies; I said nothing was more likely. He said he was calumniated; with all my heart, said I, but there are so many liars, that I find it safer to believe

[1] The price advanced for these Letters was among the considerations which originally induced the writer to set out on his Pacific voyage.

them. He said, in justice to himself, he must explain: God forbid I should interfere with you, said I, with the same factitious grin, but it can change nothing. So I kept my temper, rid myself of an unfaithful servant, found a method of conducting similar interviews in the future, and fell in my own liking. One thing more: I learned a fresh tolerance for the dead ——; he too had learned —perhaps had invented—the trick of this manner; God knows what weakness, what instability of feeling, lay beneath. *Ce que c'est que de nous!* poor human nature; that at past forty I must adjust this hateful mask for the first time, and rejoice to find it effective; that the effort of maintaining an external smile should confuse and embitter a man's soul.

To-day I have not weeded; I have written instead from six till eleven, from twelve till two; with the interruption of the interview aforesaid; a damned Letter is written for the third time; I dread to read it, for I dare not give it a fourth chance—unless it be very bad indeed. Now I write you from my mosquito curtain, to the song of saws and planes and hammers, and wood clumping on the floor above; in a day of heavenly brightness; a bird twittering near by; my eye, through the open door, commanding green meads, two or three forest trees casting their boughs against the sky, a forest-clad mountain-side beyond, and close in by the door-jamb a nick of the blue Pacific. It is March in England, bleak March, and I lie here with the great sliding doors wide open in an undershirt and p'jama trousers, and melt in the closure of mosquito bars, and burn to be out in the breeze. A few torn clouds—not white, the sun has tinged them a warm pink—swim in heaven. In which blessed and fair day, I have to make faces and speak bitter words to a man—who has deceived me, it is true—but who is poor, and older than I, and a kind of a gentleman too. On the whole, I prefer the massacre of weeds.

Sunday.—When I had done talking to you yesterday,

I played on my pipe till the conch sounded, then went over to the old house for dinner, and had scarce risen from table ere I was submerged with visitors. The first of these despatched, I spent the rest of the evening going over the Samoan translation of my *Bottle Imp* [1] with Claxton the missionary; then to bed, but being upset, I suppose, by these interruptions, and having gone all day without my weeding, not to sleep. For hours I lay awake and heard the rain fall, and saw faint, far-away lightning over the sea, and wrote you long letters which I scorn to reproduce. This morning Paul was unusually early; the dawn had scarce begun when he appeared with the tray and lit my candle; and I had breakfasted and read (with indescribable sinkings) the whole of yesterday's work before the sun had risen. Then I sat and thought, and sat and better thought. It was not good enough, nor good; it was as slack as journalism, but not so inspired; it was excellent stuff misused, and the defects stood gross on it like humps upon a camel. But could I, in my present disposition, do much more with it? in my present pressure for time, were I not better employed doing another one about as ill, than making this some thousandth fraction better? Yes, I thought; and tried the new one, and behold, I could do nothing: my head swims, words do not come to me, nor phrases, and I accepted defeat, packed up my traps, and turned to communicate the failure to my esteemed correspondent. I think it possible I overworked yesterday. Well, we'll see to-morrow—perhaps try again later. It is indeed the hope of trying later that keeps me writing to you. If I take to my pipe, I know myself —all is over for the morning. Hurray, I'll correct proofs!

[1] The first serial tale, says Mr. Clarke, ever read by Samoans in their own language was the story of the *Bottle Imp*, "which found its way into print at Samoa, and was read with wonder and delight in many a thatched Samoan hut before it won the admiration of readers at home." In the English form the story was published first in Black and White, and afterwards in the volume called *Island Nights' Entertainments*.

Pago-Pago, Wednesday.—After I finished on Sunday I passed a miserable day; went out weeding, but could not find peace. I do not like to steal my dinner, unless I have given myself a holiday in a canonical manner; and weeding after all is only fun, the amount of its utility small, and the thing capable of being done faster and nearly as well by a hired boy. In the evening Sewall came up (American consul) and proposed to take me on a malaga,[1] which I accepted. Monday I rode down to Apia, was nearly all day fighting about drafts and money; the silver problem does not touch you, but it is (in a strange and I hope passing phase) making my situation difficult in Apia.

About eleven, the flags were all half-masted; it was old Captain Hamilton (Samasoni the natives called him) who had passed away. In the evening I walked round to the U.S. consulate; it was a lovely night with a full moon; and as I got round to the hot corner of Matautu I heard hymns in front. The balcony of the dead man's house was full of women singing; Mary (the widow, a native) sat on a chair by the doorstep, and I was set beside her on a bench, and next to Paul the carpenter; as I sat down I had a glimpse of the old captain, who lay in a sheet on his own table. After the hymn was over, a native pastor made a speech which lasted a long while; the light poured out of the door and windows; the girls were sitting clustered at my feet; it was choking hot. After the speech was ended, Mary carried me within; the captain's hands were folded on his bosom, his face and head were composed; he looked as if he might speak at any moment; I have never seen this kind of waxwork so express or more venerable; and when I went away, I was conscious of a certain envy for the man who was out of the battle. All night it ran in my head, and the next day when we sighted Tutuila, and ran into this beautiful landlocked loch of Pago Pago (whence I write), Captain

[1] Boating expedition: pronounce *malanga*.

Hamilton's folded hands and quiet face said a great deal more to me than the scenery.

I am living here in a trader's house; we have a good table, Sewall doing things in style; and I hope to benefit by the change, and possibly get more stuff for Letters. In the meanwhile, I am seized quite *mal-à-propos* with desire to write a story, *The Bloody Wedding*, founded on fact—very possibly true, being an attempt to read a murder case—not yet months old, in this very place and house where I now write. The indiscretion is what stops me; but if I keep on feeling as I feel just now it will have to be written. Three Star Nettison, Kit Nettison, Field the Sailor, these are the main characters: old Nettison, and the captain of the man of war, the secondary. Possible scenario. Chapter I. . . .

To Sidney Colvin

Saturday, April 18th [1891].

MY DEAR COLVIN,—I got back on Monday night, after twenty-three hours in an open boat; the keys were lost; the consul (who had promised us a bottle of Burgundy) nobly broke open his storeroom, and we got to bed about midnight. Next morning the blessed consul promised us horses for the daybreak; forgot all about it, worthy man; set us off at last in the heat of the day, and by a short cut which caused infinite trouble, and we were not home till dinner. I was extenuated, and have had a high fever since, or should have been writing before. To-day for the first time, I risk it. Tuesday I was pretty bad; Wednesday had a fever to kill a horse; Thursday I was better, but still out of ability to do aught but read awful trash. This is the time one misses civilisation; I wished to send out for some police novels; Montépin would have about suited my frozen brain. It is a bother when all one's thought turns on one's work in some sense or other; I

could not even think yesterday; I took to inventing dishes by way of entertainment. Yesterday, while I lay asleep in the afternoon, a very lucky thing happened; the Chief Justice came to call; met one of our employés on the road; and was shown what I had done to the road.

"Is this the road across the island?" he asked.

"The only one," said Innes.

"And has one man done all this?"

"Three times," said the trusty Innes. "It has had to be made three times, and when Mr. Stevenson came, it was a track like what you see beyond."

"This must be put right," said the Chief Justice.

Sunday.—The truth is, I broke down yesterday almost as soon as I began, and have been surreptitiously finishing the entry to-day. For all that I was much better, ate all the time, and had no fever. The day was otherwise uneventful. I am reminded; I had another visitor on Friday; and Fanny and Lloyd, as they returned from a forest raid, met in our desert, untrodden road, first Father Didier, Keeper of the conscience of Mataafa, the rising star; and next the Chief Justice, sole stay of Laupepa, the present and unsteady star, and remember, a few days before we were close to the sick bed and entertained by the amateur physician of Tamasese, the late and sunken star. "That is the fun of this place," observed Lloyd; "everybody you meet is so important." Everybody is also so gloomy. It will come to war again, is the opinion of all the well informed—and before that to many bankruptcies; and after that, as usual, to famine. Here, under the microscope, we can see history at work.

Wednesday.—I have been very neglectful. A return to work, perhaps premature, but necessary, has used up all my possible energies, and made me acquainted with the living headache. I just jot down some of the past notabilia. Yesterday B., a carpenter, and K., my (unsuccessful) white man, were absent all morning from their work; I was working myself, where I hear every sound with

morbid certainty, and I can testify that not a hammer fell. Upon inquiry I found they had passed the morning making ice with our ice machine and taking the horizon with a spirit level! I had no sooner heard this than—a violent headache set in; I am a real employer of labour now, and have much of the ship captain when aroused; and if I had a headache, I believe both these gentlemen had aching hearts. I promise you, the late —— was to the front; and K., who was the most guilty, yet (in a sense) the least blameable, having the brains and character of a canary-bird, fared none the better for B.'s repartees. I hear them hard at work this morning, so the menace may be blessed. It was just after my dinner, just before theirs, that I administered my redoubtable tongue—it is really redoubtable—to these skulkers. (Paul used to triumph over Mr. J. for weeks. "I am very sorry for you," he would say; "you're going to have a talk with Mr. Stevenson when he comes home: you don't know what that is!") In fact, none of them do, till they get it. I have known K., for instance, for months; he has never heard me complain, or take notice, unless it were to praise; I have used him always as my guest, and there seems to be something in my appearance which suggests endless, ovine long-suffering! We sat in the upper verandah all evening, and discussed the price of iron roofing, and the state of the draught-horses, with Innes, a new man we have taken, and who seems to promise well.

One thing embarrasses me. No one ever seems to understand my attitude about that book; the stuff sent was never meant for other than a first state; I never meant it to appear as a book. Knowing well that I have never had one hour of inspiration since it was begun, and have only beaten out my metal by brute force and patient repetition, I hoped some day to get a "spate of style" and burnish it—fine mixed metaphor. I am now so sick that I intend, when the Letters are done and some more written that will be wanted, simply to make a book of it by

the pruning-knife. I cannot fight longer; I am sensible of having done worse than I hoped, worse than I feared; all I can do now is to do the best I can for the future, and clear the book, like a piece of bush, with axe and cutlass. Even to produce the MS. of this will occupy me, at the most favourable opinion, till the middle of next year; really five years were wanting, when I could have made a book; but I have a family, and—perhaps I could not make the book after all.

To W. Craibe Angus

The late Mr. Craibe Angus of Glasgow was one of the chief organisers of the Burns Exhibition in that city, and had proposed to send out to Samoa a precious copy of the *Jolly Beggars* to receive the autograph of R. L. S. and be returned for the purposes of that Exhibition. The line quoted, "But still our hearts are true," etc., should, it appears, run, "But still the blood is strong, the heart is Highland." The author of the *Canadian Boat Song* which opens thus was Hugh, twelfth Earl of Eglinton. The first quotation is of course from Burns.

Vailima, Samoa, April 1891.

DEAR MR. ANGUS,—Surely I remember you! It was W. C. Murray who made us acquainted, and we had a pleasant crack. I see your poet is not yet dead. I remember even our talk—or you would not think of trusting that invaluable *Jolly Beggars* to the treacherous posts, and the perils of the sea, and the carelessness of authors. I love the idea, but I could not bear the risk. However—

"Hale be your heart, hale be your fiddle—"

it was kindly thought upon.

My interest in Burns is, as you suppose, perennial. I would I could be present at the exhibition, with the purpose of which I heartily sympathise; but the *Nancy* has not waited in vain for me, I have followed my chest, the anchor is weighed long ago, I have said my last farewell to the hills and the heather and the lynns: like Leyden,

I have gone into far lands to die, not stayed like Burns to mingle in the end with Scottish soil. I shall not even return like Scott for the last scene. Burns Exhibitions are all over. 'Tis a far cry to Lochow from tropical Vailima.

> "But still our hearts are true, our hearts are Highland,
> And we in dreams behold the Hebrides."

When your hand is in, will you remember our poor Edinburgh Robin? Burns alone has been just to his promise; follow Burns, he knew best, he knew whence he drew fire—from the poor, white-faced, drunken, vicious boy that raved himself to death in the Edinburgh madhouse. Surely there is more to be gleaned about Fergusson, and surely it is high time the task was set about. I may tell you (because your poet is not dead) something of how I feel: we are three Robins who have touched the Scots lyre this last century. Well, the one is the world's; he did it, he came off, he is for ever; but I and the other—ah! what bonds we have—born in the same city; both sickly, both pestered, one nearly to madness, one to the madhouse, with a damnatory creed; both seeing the stars and the dawn, and wearing shoe-leather on the same ancient stones, under the same pends, down the same closes, where our common ancestors clashed in their armour, rusty or bright. And the old Robin, who was before Burns and the flood, died in his acute, painful youth, and left the models of the great things that were to come; and the new, who came after, outlived his green-sickness, and has faintly tried to parody the finished work. If you will collect the strays of Robin Fergusson, fish for material, collect any last re-echoing of gossip, command me to do what you prefer—to write the preface—to write the whole if you prefer: anything, so that another monument (after Burns's) be set up to my unhappy predecessor on the causey of Auld Reekie. You will never know, nor will any man, how deep this feeling is: I believe Fergusson

lives in me. I do, but tell it not in Gath ; every man has these fanciful superstitions, coming, going, but yet enduring ; only most men are so wise (or the poet in them so dead) that they keep their follies for themselves.—I am, yours very truly, ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

TO EDMUND GOSSE

Vailima, April 1891.

MY DEAR GOSSE,—I have to thank you and Mrs. Gosse for many mementoes, chiefly for your *Life* of your father. There is a very delicate task, very delicately done. I noted one or two carelessnesses, which I meant to point out to you for another edition ; but I find I lack the time, and you will remark them for yourself against a new edition. There were two, or perhaps three, flabbinesses of style which (in your work) amazed me. Am I right in thinking you were a shade bored over the last chapters ? or was it my own fault that made me think them susceptible of a more athletic compression ? (The flabbinesses were not there, I think, but in the more admirable part, where they showed the bigger.) Take it all together, the book struck me as if you had been hurried at the last, but particularly hurried over the proofs, and could still spend a very profitable fortnight in earnest revision and (towards the end) heroic compression. The book, in design, subject, and general execution, is well worth the extra trouble. And even if I were wrong in thinking it specially wanted, it will not be lost ; for do we not know, in Flaubert's dread confession, that " prose is never done " ? What a medium to work in, for a man tired, perplexed among different aims and subjects, and spurred by the immediate need of " siller " ! However, it's mine for what it's worth ; and it's one of yours, the devil take it ; and you know, as well as Flaubert, and as well as me, that it is *never done ;* in other words, it is a torment of the pit, usually neglected

by the bards who (lucky beggars!) approached the Styx in measure. I speak bitterly at the moment, having just detected in myself the last fatal symptom, three blank verses in succession—and I believe, God help me, a hemistich at the tail of them; hence I have deposed the labourer, come out of hell by my private trap, and now write to you from my little place in purgatory. But I prefer hell: would I could always dig in those red coals—or else be at sea in a schooner, bound for isles unvisited: to be on shore and not to work is emptiness—suicidal vacancy.

I was the more interested in your *Life* of your father, because I meditate one of mine, or rather of my family. I have no such materials as you, and (our objections already made) your attack fills me with despair; it is direct and elegant, and your style is always admirable to me—lenity, lucidity, usually a high strain of breeding, an elegance that has a pleasant air of the accidental. But beware of purple passages. I wonder if you think as well of your purple passages as I do of mine? I wonder if you think as ill of mine as I do of yours? I wonder; I can tell you at least what is wrong with yours—they are treated in the spirit of verse. The spirit—I don't mean the measure, I don't mean you fall into bastard cadences; what I mean is that they seem vacant and smoothed out, ironed, if you like. And in a style which (like yours) aims more and more successfully at the academic, one purple word is already much; three—a whole phrase—is inadmissible. Wed yourself to a clean austerity: that is your force. Wear a linen ephod, splendidly candid. Arrange its folds, but do not fasten it with any brooch. I swear to you, in your talking robes, there should be no patch of adornment; and where the subject forces, let it force you no further than it must; and be ready with a twinkle of your pleasantry. Yours is a fine tool, and I see so well how to hold it; I wonder if you see how to hold mine? But then I am to the neck in prose, and just now in the "dark *interstylar* cave," all

methods and effects wooing me, myself in the midst impotent to follow any. I look for dawn presently, and a full flowing river of expression, running whither it wills. But these useless seasons, above all, when a man *must* continue to spoil paper, are infinitely weary.

We are in our house after a fashion ; without furniture, 'tis true, camping there, like the family after a sale. But the bailiff has not yet appeared ; he will probably come after. The place is beautiful beyond dreams ; some fifty miles of the Pacific spread in front ; deep woods all round ; a mountain making in the sky a profile of huge trees upon our left ; about us, the little island of our clearing, studded with brave old gentlemen (or ladies, or " the twa o' them ") whom we have spared. It is a good place to be in ; night and morning, we have Theodore Rousseaus (always a new one) hung to amuse us on the walls of the world ; and the moon—this is our good season, we have a moon just now—makes the night a piece of heaven. It amazes me how people can live on in the dirty north ; yet if you saw our rainy season (which is really a caulker for wind, wet, and darkness—howling showers, roaring winds, pit-blackness at noon) you might marvel how we could endure that. And we can't. But there's a winter everywhere ; only ours is in the summer. Mark my words : there will be a winter in heaven—and in hell. *Cela rentre dans les procédés du bon Dieu ; et vous verrez !* There's another very good thing about Vailima, I am away from the little bubble of the literary life. It is not all beer and skittles, is it ? By the by, my *Ballads* seem to have been dam bad ; all the crickets sing so in their crickety papers ; and I have no ghost of an idea on the point myself : verse is always to me the unknowable. You might tell me how it strikes a professional bard : not that it really matters, for, of course, good or bad, I don't think I shall get into *that* galley any more. But I should like to know if you join the shrill chorus of the crickets. The crickets are the devil in all to you : 'tis a strange thing, they seem to

rejoice like a strong man in their injustice. I trust you got my letter about your Browning book. In case it missed, I wish to say again that your publication of Browning's kind letter, as an illustration of *his* character, was modest, proper, and in radiant good taste.—In Witness whereof, etc. etc.,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

To Miss Rawlinson

The next is written to a young friend and visitor of Bournemouth days (see vol. xxiv. p. 227) on the news of her engagement to Mr. Alfred Spender.

Vailima, Apia, Samoa, April 1891.

MY DEAR MAY,—I never think of you by any more ceremonial name, so I will not pretend. There is not much chance that I shall forget you until the time comes for me to forget all this little turmoil in a corner (though indeed I have been in several corners) of an inconsiderable planet. You remain in my mind for a good reason, having given me (in so short a time) the most delightful pleasure. I shall remember, and you must still be beautiful. The truth is, you must grow more so, or you will soon be less. It is not so easy to be a flower, even when you bear a flower's name. And if I admired you so much, and still remember you, it is not because of your face, but because you were then worthy of it, as you must still continue.

Will you give my heartiest congratulations to Mr. Spender? He has my admiration; he is a brave man; when I was young, I should have run away from the sight of you, pierced with the sense of my unfitness. He is more wise and manly. What a good husband he will have to be! And you—what a good wife! Carry your love tenderly. I will never forgive him—or you—it is in both your hands—if the face that once gladdened my heart should be changed into one sour or sorrowful

What a person you are to give flowers! It was so I first heard of you; and now you are giving the May flower!

Yes, Skerryvore has passed; it was, for us. But I wish you could see us in our new home on the mountain, in the middle of great woods, and looking far out over the Pacific. When Mr. Spender is very rich, he must bring you round the world and let you see it, and see the old gentleman and the old lady. I mean to live quite a long while yet, and my wife must do the same, or else I couldn't manage it; so, you see, you will have plenty of time; and it's a pity not to see the most beautiful places, and the most beautiful people moving there, and the real stars and moon overhead, instead of the tin imitations that preside over London. I do not think my wife very well; but I am in hopes she will now have a little rest. It has been a hard business, above all for her; we lived four months in the hurricane season in a miserable house, overborne with work, ill-fed, continually worried, drowned in perpetual rain, beaten upon by wind, so that we must sit in the dark in the evenings; and then I ran away, and she had a month of it alone. Things go better now; the back of the work is broken; and we are still foolish enough to look forward to a little peace. I am a very different person from the prisoner of Skerryvore. The other day I was three-and-twenty hours in an open boat; it made me pretty ill; but fancy its not killing me half-way! It is like a fairy story that I should have recovered liberty and strength, and should go round again among my fellow-men, boating, riding, bathing, toiling hard with a wood-knife in the forest. I can wish you nothing more delightful than my fortune in life; I wish it you; and better, if the thing be possible.

Lloyd is tinkling below me on the typewriter; my wife has just left the room; she asks me to say she would have written had she been well enough, and hopes to do it still. —Accept the best wishes of your admirer,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

To Sidney Colvin

This letter announces (1) the arrival of Mrs. Thomas Stevenson from Sydney, to take up her abode in her son's island home now that the conditions of life there had been made fairly comfortable; and (2) the receipt of a letter from me expressing the disappointment felt by Stevenson's friends at home at the impersonal and even tedious character of some portions of the South Sea Letters that had reached us. As a corrective of this opinion, I may perhaps mention here that there is a certain many-voyaged master-mariner as well as master-writer—no less a person than Mr. Joseph Conrad—who does not at all share it, and prefers *In the South Seas* to *Treasure Island*.

[*Vailima*] *April 29th*, '91.

MY DEAR COLVIN,—I begin again. I was awake this morning about half-past four. It was still night, but I made my fire, which is always a delightful employment, and read Lockhart's *Scott* until the day began to peep. It was a beautiful and sober dawn, a dove-coloured dawn, insensibly brightening to gold. I was looking at it some while over the down-hill profile of our eastern road when I chanced to glance northward, and saw with extraordinary pleasure the sea lying outspread. It seemed as smooth as glass, and yet I knew the surf was roaring all along the reef, and indeed, if I had listened, I could have heard it—and saw the white sweep of it outside Matautu.

I am out of condition still, and can do nothing, and toil to be at my pen, and see some ink behind me. I have taken up again *The High Woods of Ulufanua*. I still think the fable too fantastic and far-fetched. But, on a re-reading, fell in love with my first chapter, and for good or evil I must finish it. It is really good, well fed with facts, true to the manners, and (for once in my works) rendered pleasing by the presence of a heroine who is pretty. Miss Uma is pretty; a fact. All my other women have been as ugly as sin, and like Falconet's horse (I have just been reading the anecdote in Lockhart), *mortes* forbye.

News: our old house is now half demolished; it is

to be rebuilt on a new site ; now we look down upon and through the open posts of it like a bird-cage, to the woods beyond. My poor Paulo has lost his father and succeeded to thirty thousand thalers (I think) ; he had to go down to the consulate yesterday to send a legal paper ; got drunk, of course, and is still this morning in so bemused a condition that our breakfasts all went wrong. Lafaele is absent at the deathbed of his fair spouse ; fair she was, but not in deed, acting as harlot to the wreckers at work on the warships, to which society she probably owes her end, having fallen off a cliff, or been thrust off it—*inter pocula.* Henry is the same, our stand-by. In this transition stage he has been living in Apia ; but the other night he stayed up, and sat with us about the chimney in my room. It was the first time he had seen a fire in a hearth ; he could not look at it without smiles, and was always anxious to put on another stick. We entertained him with the fairy tales of civilisation—theatres, London, blocks in the street, Universities, the Underground, newspapers, etc., and projected once more his visit to Sydney. If we can manage, it will be next Christmas. (I see it will be impossible for me to afford a further journey *this* winter.) We have spent since we have been here about £2,500, which is not much if you consider we have built on that three houses, one of them of some size, and a considerable stable, made two miles of road some three times, cleared many acres of bush, made some miles of path, planted quantities of food, and enclosed a horse paddock and some acres of pig run ; but 'tis a good deal of money regarded simply as money. K. is bosh ; I have no use for him ; but we must do what we can with the fellow meanwhile ; he is good-humoured and honest, but inefficient, idle himself, the cause of idleness in others, grumbling, a self-excuser—all the faults in a bundle. He owes us thirty weeks' service—the wretched Paul about half as much. Henry is almost the only one of our employés who has a credit.

May 17th.—Well, am I ashamed of myself? I do not think so. I have been hammering letters ever since, and got three ready and a fourth about half through; all four will go by the mail, which is what I wish, for so I keep at least my start. Days and days of unprofitable stubbing and digging, and the result still poor as literature, left-handed, heavy, unillumined, but I believe readable and interesting as matter. It has been no joke of a hard time, and when my task was done, I had little taste for anything but blowing on the pipe. A few necessary letters filled the bowl to overflowing.

My mother has arrived, young, well, and in good spirits. By desperate exertions, which have wholly floored Fanny, her room was ready for her, and the dining-room fit to eat in. It was a famous victory. Lloyd never told me of your portrait till a few days ago; fortunately, I had no pictures hung yet; and the space over my chimney waits your counterfeit presentment. I have not often heard anything that pleased me more; your severe head shall frown upon me and keep me to the mark. But why has it not come? Have you been as forgetful as Lloyd?

18th.—Miserable comforters are ye all! I read your esteemed pages this morning by lamplight and the glimmer of the dawn, and as soon as breakfast was over, I must turn to and tackle these despised labours! Some courage was necessary, but not wanting. There is one thing at least by which I can avenge myself for my drubbing, for on one point you seem impenetrably stupid. Can I find no form of words which will at last convey to your intelligence the fact that *these letters were never meant, and are not now meant, to be other than a quarry of materials from which the book may be drawn?* There seems something incommunicable in this (to me) simple idea; I know Lloyd failed to comprehend it, I doubt if he has grasped it now; and I despair, after all these efforts, that you should ever be enlightened. Still, oblige me by reading

that form of words once more, and see if a light does not break. You may be sure, after the friendly freedoms of your criticism (necessary I am sure, and wholesome I know, but untimely to the poor labourer in his landslip) that mighty little of it will stand.

Our Paul has come into a fortune, and wishes to go home to the Hie Germanie. This is a tile on our head, and if a shower, which is now falling, lets up, I must go down to Apia, and see if I can find a substitute of any kind. This is, from any point of view, disgusting; above all, from that of work; for, whatever the result, the mill has to be kept turning; apparently dust, and not flour, is the proceed. Well, there is gold in the dust, which is a fine consolation, since—well, I can't help it; night or morning, I do my darndest, and if I cannot charge for merit, I must e'en charge for toil, of which I have plenty and plenty more ahead before this cup is drained; sweat and hyssop are the ingredients.

We are clearing from Carruthers' Road to the pig fence, twenty-eight powerful natives with Catholic medals about their necks, all swiping in like Trojans; long may the sport continue!

The invoice to hand. Ere this goes out, I hope to see your expressive, but surely not benignant countenance! Adieu, O culler of offensive expressions—'and a' to be a posy to your ain dear May!'—Fanny seems a little revived again after her spasm of work. Our books and furniture keep slowly draining up the road, in a sad state of scatterment and disrepair; I wish the devil had had K. by his red beard before he had packed my library. Odd leaves and sheets and boards—a thing to make a bibliomaniac shed tears—are fished out of odd corners. But I am no bibliomaniac, praise Heaven, and I bear up, and rejoice when I find anything safe.

19*th*.—However, I worked five hours on the brute, and finished my Letter all the same, and couldn't sleep last night by consequence. Haven't had a bad night since I

don't know when; dreamed a large handsome man (a New Orleans planter) had insulted my wife, and, do what I pleased, I could not make him fight me; and woke to find it was the eleventh anniversary of my marriage. A letter usually takes me from a week to three days; but I'm sometimes two days on a page—I was once three—and then my friends kick me. *C'est-y-bête!* I wish letters of that charming quality could be so timed as to arrive when a fellow wasn't working at the truck in question; but, of course, that can't be. Did not go down last night. It showered all afternoon, and poured heavy and loud all night.

You should have seen our twenty-five popés (the Samoan phrase for a Catholic, lay or cleric) squatting when the day's work was done on the ground outside the verandah, and pouring in the rays of forty-eight eyes through the back and the front door of the dining-room, while Henry and I and the boss pope signed the contract. The second boss (an old man) wore a kilt (as usual) and a Balmoral bonnet with a little tartan edging and the tails pulled off. I told him that hat belong to my country—Sekotia; and he said, yes, that was the place that he belonged to right enough. And then all the Papists laughed till the woods rang; he was slashing away with a cutlass as he spoke.

The pictures[1] have decidedly not come; they may probably arrive Sunday.

To Miss Adelaide Boodle

The reference in the first paragraph is to a previous letter concerning private matters, in which Stevenson had remonstrated with his correspondent on what seemed to him her mistaken reasons for a certain course of conduct.

[*Vailima, May* 1891.]

MY DEAR ADELAIDE,—I will own you just did manage to tread on my gouty toe; and I beg to assure you with

[1] Portraits of myself for which he had asked.

most people I should simply have turned away and said no more. My cudgelling was therefore in the nature of a caress or testimonial.

God forbid, I should seem to judge for you on such a point; it was what you seemed to set forth as your reasons that fluttered my old Presbyterian spirit—for, mind you, I am a child of the Covenanters—whom I do not love, but they are mine after all, my father's and my mother's—and they had their merits too, and their ugly beauties, and grotesque heroisms, that I love them for, the while I laugh at them; but in their name and mine do what you think right, and let the world fall. That is the privilege and the duty of private persons; and I shall think the more of you at the greater distance, because you keep a promise to your fellow-man, your helper and creditor in life, by just so much as I was tempted to think the less of you (O not much, or I would never have been angry) when I thought you were the swallower of a (tin-foil) formula.

I must say I was uneasy about my letter, not because it was too strong as an expression of my unregenerate sentiments, but because I knew full well it should be followed by something kinder. And the mischief has been in my health. I fell sharply sick in Sydney, was put aboard the *Lübeck* pretty bad, got to Vailima, hung on a month there, and didn't pick up as well as my work needed; set off on a journey, gained a great deal, lost it again; and am back at Vailima, still no good at my necessary work. I tell you this for my imperfect excuse that I should not have written you again sooner to remove the bad taste of my last.

A road has been called Adelaide Road; it leads from the back of our house to the bridge, and thence to the garden, and by a bifurcation to the pig pen. It is thus much traversed, particularly by Fanny. An oleander, the only one of your seeds that prospered in this climate, grows there; and the name is now some week or ten

days applied and published. Adelaide Road leads also into the bush, to the banana patch and by a second bifurcation over the left branch of the stream to the plateau and the right hand of the gorges. In short, it leads to all sorts of good, and is, besides, in itself a pretty winding path, bound downhill among big woods to the margin of the stream.

What a strange idea, to think me a Jew-hater! Isaiah and David and Heine are good enough for me; and I leave more unsaid. Were I of Jew blood, I do not think I could ever forgive the Christians; the ghettos would get in my nostrils like mustard or lit gunpowder. Just so you, as being a child of the Presbytery, I retain—I need not dwell on that. The ascendant hand is what I feel most strongly; I am bound in and in with my forbears; were he one of mine, I should not be struck at all by Mr. Moss of Bevis Marks, I should still see behind him Moses of the Mount and the Tables and the shining face. We are all nobly born; fortunate those who know it; blessed those who remember.

I am, my dear Adelaide, most genuinely yours,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

Write by return to say you are better, and I will try to do the same.

To Charles Baxter

The following refers again to the project of a long genealogical novel expanded from the original idea of *Henry Shovel*.

[*Vailima*] *Tuesday*, 19*th May* '91.

my dear charles,—I don't know what you think of me, not having written to you at all during your illness. I find two sheets begun with your name, but that is no excuse. . . . I am keeping bravely; getting about better every day, and hope soon to be in my usual fettle. My books begin to come; and I fell once more on the Old

Bailey session papers. I have 1778, 1784, and 1786. Should you be able to lay hands on any other volumes, above all a little later, I should be very glad you should buy them for me. I particularly want *one* or *two* during the course of the Peninsular War. Come to think, I ought rather to have communicated this want to Bain. Would it bore you to communicate to that effect with the great man? The sooner I have them, the better for me. 'Tis for *Henry Shovel.* But *Henry Shovel* has now turned into a work called *The Shovels of Newton French: including Memoirs of Henry Shovel, a Private in the Peninsular War,* which work is to begin in 1664 with the marriage of Skipper, afterwards Alderman Shovel of Bristol, Henry's great-great-grandfather, and end about 1832 with his own second marriage to the daughter of his runaway aunt. Will the public ever stand such an opus? Gude kens, but it tickles me. Two or three historical personages will just appear: Judge Jeffreys, Wellington, Colquhoun, Grant, and I think Townsend the runner. I know the public won't like it; let 'em lump it then; I mean to make it good; it will be more like a saga.

Adieu.—Yours ever affectionately,

R. L. STEVENSON.

To Sidney Colvin

[*Vailima*] *June* 1891.

SIR,—To you, under your portrait, which is, in expression, your true, breathing self, and up to now saddens me; in time, and soon, I shall be glad to have it there; it is still only a reminder of your absence. Fanny wept when we unpacked it, and you know how little she is given to that mood; I was scarce Roman myself, but that does not count—I lift up my voice so readily. These are good compliments to the artist.[1] I write in the midst of a

[1] Miss Fanny Macpherson, now Lady Holroyd.

wreck of books, which have just come up, and have for once defied my labours to get straight. The whole floor is filled with them, and (what's worse) most of the shelves forbye ; and where they are to go to, and what is to become of the librarian, God knows. It is hot to-night, and has been airless all day, and I am out of sorts, and my work sticks, the devil fly away with it and me. We had an alarm of war since last I wrote my screeds to you, and it blew over, and is to blow on again, and the rumour goes they are to begin by killing all the whites. I have no belief in this, and should be infinitely sorry if it came to pass—I do not mean for *us*, that were otiose—but for the poor, deluded schoolboys, who should hope to gain by such a step.

Letter resumed, June 20th.—No diary this time. Why ? you ask. I have only sent out four Letters, and two chapters of *The Wrecker*. Yes, but to get these I have written 132 pp., 66,000 words in thirty days ; 2200 words a day ; the labours of an elephant. God knows what it's like, and don't ask me, but nobody shall say I have spared pains. I thought for some time it wouldn't come at all. I was days and days over the first letter of the lot—days and days writing and deleting and making no headway whatever, till I thought I should have gone bust ; but it came at last after a fashion, and the rest went a thought more easily, though I am not so fond as to fancy any better.

Your opinion as to the Letters as a whole is so damnatory that I put them by. But there is a " hell of a want of " money this year. And these Gilbert Island papers, being the most interesting in matter, and forming a compact whole, and being well illustrated, I did think of as a possible resource.

It would be called

Six Months in Melanesia,
Two Island Kings,
——— *Monarchies,*
Gilbert Island Kings,
——— *Monarchies,*

and I dare say I'll think of a better yet—and would divide thus :—

Butaritari

I. A Town Asleep.
II. The Three Brothers.
III. Around our House.
IV. A Tale of a Tapu.
V. The Five Days' Festival.
VI. Domestic Life—(which might be omitted, but not well, better be recast).

The King of Apemama

VII. The Royal Traders.
VIII. Foundation of Equator Town.
IX. The Palace of Mary Warren.
X. Equator Town and the Palace.
XI. King and Commons.
XII. The Devil Work Box.
XIII. The Three Corslets.
XIV. Tail piece ; the Court upon a Journey.

I wish you to watch these closely, judging them as a whole, and treating them as I have asked you, and favour me with your damnatory advice. I look up at your portrait, and it frowns upon me. You seem to view me with reproach. The expression is excellent ; Fanny wept when she saw it, and you know she is not given to the melting mood. She seems really better ; I have a touch of fever again, I fancy overwork, and to-day, when I have overtaken my letters, I shall blow on my pipe. Tell Mrs. Sitwell I have been playing *Le Chant d'Amour* lately, and have arranged it, after awful trouble, rather prettily for two pipes ; and it brought her before me with an effect scarce short of hallucination. I could hear her voice in every note ; yet I had forgot the air entirely, and began to pipe it from notes as something new, when I was brought up with a round turn by this reminiscence.

We are now very much installed; the dining-room is done, and looks lovely. Soon we shall begin to photograph and send you our circumstances. My room is still a howling wilderness. I sleep on a platform in a window, and strike my mosquito bar and roll up my bedclothes every morning, so that the bed becomes by day a divan. A great part of the floor is knee-deep in books, yet nearly all the shelves are filled, alas! It is a place to make a pig recoil, yet here are my interminable labours begun daily by lamp-light, and sometimes not yet done when the lamp has once more to be lighted. The effect of pictures in this place is surprising. They give great pleasure.

June 21*st*.—A word more. I had my breakfast this morning at 4.30! My new cook has beaten me and (as Lloyd says) revenged all the cooks in the world. I have been hunting them to give me breakfast early since I was twenty; and now here comes Mr. Ratke, and I have to plead for mercy. I cannot stand 4.30; I am a mere fevered wreck; it is now half-past eight, and I can no more, and four hours divide me from lunch, the devil take the man! Yesterday it was about 5.30, which I can stand; day before 5, which is bad enough; to-day, I give out. It is like a London season, and as I do not take a siesta once in a month, and then only five minutes, I am being worn to the bones, and look aged and anxious.

We have Rider Haggard's brother here as a Land Commissioner; a nice kind of a fellow; indeed, all the three Land Commissioners are very agreeable.

To E. L. Burlingame

For the result of the suggestion made in the following, see Scribner's Magazine, October 1893, p. 494.

Vailima [*Summer* 1891].

MY DEAR BURLINGAME,—I find among my grandfather's papers his own reminiscences of his voyage round

the north with Sir Walter, eighty years ago, *labuntur anni!* They are not remarkably good, but he was not a bad observer, and several touches seem to me speaking. It has occurred to me you might like them to appear in the Magazine. If you would, kindly let me know, and tell me how you would like it handled. My grandad's MS. runs to between six and seven thousand words, which I could abbreviate of anecdotes that scarce touch Sir W. Would you like this done? Would you like me to introduce the old gentleman? I had something of the sort in my mind, and could fill a few columns rather *à propos.* I give you the first offer of this, according to your request; for though it may forestall one of the interests of my biography, the thing seems to me particularly suited for prior appearance in a magazine.

I see the first number of *The Wrecker;* I thought it went lively enough; and by a singular accident, the picture is not unlike Tai-o-hae!

Thus we see the age of miracles, etc.—Yours very sincerely, R. L. S.

Proofs for next mail.

To W. Craibe Angus

Referring again to the Burns Exhibition and to his correspondent's request for an autograph in a special copy of *The Jolly Beggars.*

[*Summer* 1891.]

DEAR MR. ANGUS,—You can use my letter as you will. The parcel has not come; pray Heaven the next post bring it safe. Is it possible for me to write a preface here? I will try if you like, if you think I must: though surely there are Rivers in Assyria. Of course you will send me sheets of the catalogue; I suppose it (the preface) need not be long; perhaps it should be rather very short? Be sure you give me your views upon these points. Also tell me what names to mention among those of your

helpers, and do remember to register everything, else it is not safe.

The true place (in my view) for a monument to Fergusson were the churchyard of Haddington. But as that would perhaps not carry many votes, I should say one of the two following sites:—First, either as near the site of the old Bedlam as we could get, or, second, beside the Cross, the heart of his city. Upon this I would have a fluttering butterfly, and, I suggest, the citation,

Poor butterfly, thy case I mourn.

For the case of Fergusson is not one to pretend about. A more miserable tragedy the sun never shone upon, or (in consideration of our climate) I should rather say refused to brighten.—Yours truly,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

Where Burns goes will not matter. He is no local poet, like your Robin the First; he is general as the casing air. Glasgow, as the chief city of Scottish men, would do well; but for God's sake, don't let it be like the Glasgow memorial to Knox; I remember, when I first saw this, laughing for an hour by Shrewsbury clock.

R. L. S.

To H. C. IDE

The following is written to the American Land Commissioner (later Chief Justice for a term) in Samoa, whose elder daughter, then at home in the States, had been born on a Christmas Day, and consequently regarded herself as defrauded of her natural rights to a private anniversary of her own.

[*Vailima, June* 19, 1891.]

DEAR MR. IDE,—Herewith please find the DOCUMENT, which I trust will prove sufficient in law. It seems to me very attractive in its eclecticism; Scots, English, and Roman law phrases are all indifferently introduced, and

a quotation from the works of Haynes Bayly can hardly fail to attract the indulgence of the Bench.—Yours very truly, ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

I, Robert Louis Stevenson, Advocate of the Scots Bar, author of *The Master of Ballantrae* and *Moral Emblems*, stuck civil engineer, sole owner and patentee of the Palace and Plantation known as Vailima in the island of Upolu, Samoa, a British Subject, being in sound mind, and pretty well, I thank you, in body:

In consideration that Miss Annie H. Ide, daughter of H. C. Ide, in the town of Saint Johnsbury, in the county of Caledonia, in the state of Vermont, United States of America, was born, out of all reason, upon Christmas Day, and is therefore out of all justice denied the consolation and profit of a proper birthday;

And considering that I, the said Robert Louis Stevenson, have attained an age when O, we never mention it, and that I have now no further use for a birthday of any description;

And in consideration that I have met H. C. Ide, the father of the said Annie H. Ide, and found him about as white a land commissioner as I require:

Have transferred, and *do hereby transfer*, to the said Annie H. Ide, *all and whole* my rights and privileges in the thirteenth day of November, formerly my birthday, now, hereby, and henceforth, the birthday of the said Annie H. Ide, to have, hold, exercise, and enjoy the same in the customary manner, by the sporting of fine raiment, eating of rich meats, and receipt of gifts, compliments, and copies of verse, according to the manner of our ancestors;

And I direct the said Annie H. Ide to add to the said name of Annie H. Ide the name Louisa—at least in private; and I charge her to use my said birthday with moderation and humanity, *et tamquam bona filia familiæ*, the said birthday not being so young as it once was, and

having carried me in a very satisfactory manner since I can remember;

And in case the said Annie H. Ide shall neglect or contravene either of the above conditions, I hereby revoke the donation and transfer my rights in the said birthday to the President of the United States of America for the time being:

In witness whereof I have hereto set my hand and seal this nineteenth day of June in the year of grace eighteen hundred and ninety-one.

SEAL

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

Witness, LLOYD OSBOURNE,
Witness, HAROLD WATTS.

TO SIDNEY COLVIN

The misgivings herein expressed about the imminence of a native war were not realised until two years later, and the plans of defence into which Stevenson here enters with characteristic gusto were not put to the test.

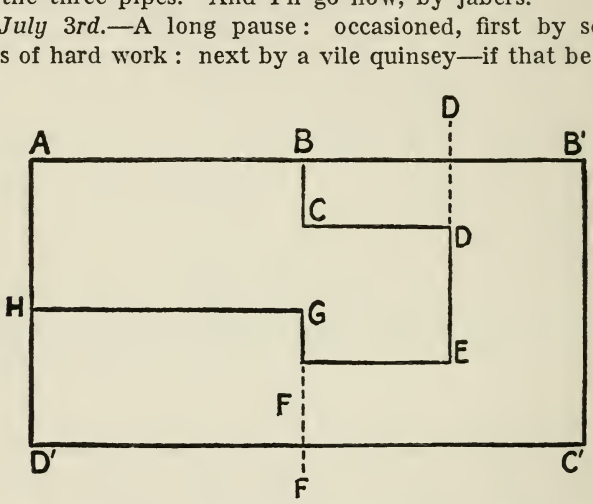
[*Vailima, June and July* 1891.]

MY DEAR COLVIN,—I am so hideously in arrears that I know not where to begin. However, here I am a prisoner in my room, unfit for work, incapable of reading with interest, and trying to catch up a bit. We have a guest here: a welcome guest: my Sydney music master, whose health broke down, and who came with his remarkable simplicity, to ask a month's lodging. He is newly married, his wife in the family way: beastly time to fall sick. I have found, by good luck, a job for him here which will pay some of his way: and in the meantime he is a pleasant guest, for he plays the flute with little sentiment but great perfection, and endears himself by his simplicity. To me, especially; I am so weary of finding people approach me with precaution, pick their

words, flatter, and twitter; but the muttons of the good God are not at all afraid of the lion. They take him as he comes, and he does not bite—at least not hard. This makes us a party of 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, at table; deftly waited on by Mary Carter, a very nice Sydney girl, who served us at a boarding-house and has since come on—how long she will endure this exile is another story; and gauchely waited on by Faauma, the new left-handed wife of the famed Lafaele, a little creature in native dress of course and as beautiful as a bronze candlestick, so fine, clean and dainty in every limb; her arms and her little hips in particular masterpieces. The rest of the crew may be stated briefly: the great Henry Simelé, still to the front; King, of the yellow beard, rather a disappointment—I am inclined on this point to republican opinions: Ratke, a German cook, good—and Germanly bad, he don't make *my* kitchen; Paul, now working out his debts outdoor; Emma, a strange weird creature—I suspect (from her colour) a quarter white—widow of a white man, ugly, capable, a really good laundress; Java—yes, that is the name—they spell it Siava, but pronounce it, and explain it Java—her assistant, a creature I adore from her plain, wholesome, bread-and-butter beauty. An honest, almost ugly, bright, good-natured face; the rest (to my sense) merely exquisite. She comes steering into my room of a morning, like Mrs. Nickleby, with elaborate precaution; unlike her, noiseless. If I look up from my work, she is ready with an explosive smile. I generally don't, and wait to look at her as she stoops for the bellows, and trips tiptoe off again, a miracle of successful womanhood in every line. I am amused to find plain, healthy Java pass in my fancy so far before pretty young Faauma. I observed Lloyd the other day to say that Java must have been lovely "when she was young"; and I thought it an odd word, of a woman in the height of health, not yet touched with fat, though (to be just) a little slack of bust.

Our party you know: Fanny, Lloyd, my mother, Belle, and "the babe"—as we call him—Austin. We have now three instruments; Boehm flageolet, flute, and $B_\flat$ clarinet; and we expect in a few days our piano. This is a great pleasure to me; the band-mastering, the playing and all. As soon as I am done with this stage of a letter, I shall return, not being allowed to play, to band-master, being engaged in an attempt to arrange an air with effect for the three pipes. And I'll go now, by jabers.

July 3*rd.*—A long pause: occasioned, first by some days of hard work: next by a vile quinsey—if that be the



way to spell it. But to-day I must write. For we have all kinds of larks on hand. The wars and rumours of wars begin to take consistency, insomuch that we have landed the weapons this morning, and inspected the premises with a view to defence. Of course it will come to nothing; but as in all stories of massacres, the one you don't prepare for is the one that comes off. All our natives think ill of the business; none of the whites do. According to our natives the demonstration threatened for to-day or to-morrow is one of vengeance on the whites—small wonder—and if that begins—where will it stop? Any-

way I don't mean to go down for nothing, if I can help it; and to amuse you I will tell you our plans.

There is the house, upper story. Our weak point is of course the sides AB, AH; so we propose to place half our garrison in the space HGFD and half in the opposite corner, BB′CD. We shall communicate through the interior, there is a water-tank in the angle C, my mother and Austin are to go in the loft. The holding of only these two corners and deserting the corner C′ is for economy and communication, two doors being in the sides GF and CD; so that any one in the corner C′ could only communicate or be reinforced by exposure. Besides we are short of mattresses. Garrison: R. L. S., Lloyd, Fanny, King, Ratke—doubtful, he may go—Emma, Mary, Belle; weapons: eight revolvers and a shot gun, and swords galore; but we're pretty far gone when we come to the swords. It has been rather a lark arranging; but I find it a bore to write, and I doubt it will be cruel stale to read about, when all's over and done, as it will be ere this goes, I fancy: far more ere it reaches you.

Date unknown.—Well, nothing as yet, though I don't swear by it yet. There has been a lot of trouble, and there still is a lot of doubt as to the future; and those who sit in the chief seats, who are all excellent, pleasant creatures, are not, perhaps, the most wise of mankind. They actually proposed to kidnap and deport Mataafa; a scheme which would have loosed the avalanche at once. But some human being interfered and choked off this pleasing scheme. You ask me in yours just received, what will become of us if it comes to a war? Well, if it is a war of the old sort, nothing. It will mean a little bother, and a great deal of theft, and more amusement. But if it comes to the massacre lark, I can only answer with the Bell of Old Bow. You are to understand that, in my reading of the native character, every day that passes is a solid gain. They put in the time public speaking; so wear out their energy, develop points of difference and

exacerbate internal ill-feeling. Consequently, I feel less apprehension of difficulty now, by about a hundredfold. All that I stick to, is that if war begins, there are ten chances to one we shall have it bad. The natives have been scurvily used by all the white powers without exception; and they labour under the belief, of which they can't be cured, that they defeated Germany. This makes an awkward complication.

I was extremely vexed to hear you were ill again. I hope you are better. 'Tis a long time we have known each other now, to be sure. Well, well! you say you are sure to catch fever in the bush; so we do continually; but you are to conceive Samoa fever as the least formidable malady under heaven: implying only a day or so of slight headache and languor and ill humour, easily reduced by quinine or antipyrine. The hot fever I had was from over-exertion and blood poisoning, no doubt, and irritation of the bladder; it went of its own accord and with rest. I have had since a bad quinsey which knocked me rather useless for about a week, but I stuck to my work, with great difficulty and small success.

Date unknown.—But it's fast day and July, and the rude inclement depth of winter, and the thermometer was 68 this morning and a few days ago it was 63, and we have all been perishing with cold. All still seems quiet. Your counterfeit presentments are all round us: the pastel over my bed, the Dew-Smith photograph over my door, and the "celebrity" on Fanny's table. My room is now done, and looks very gay, and chromatic with its blue walls and my coloured lines of books.

To Sidney Colvin

This is the first letter in which Stevenson expresses the opinion which had been forcing itself upon him, and which he felt it his duty in the following year to express publicly in letters to the Times, of the unwisdom of the government established under the treaty

between the Three Powers and the incompetence of the officials appointed to carry it out.

[*Vailima*] *Sunday, Sept.* 5 (?), 1891.

MY DEAR COLVIN,—Yours from Lochinver has just come. You ask me if I am ever homesick for the Highlands and the Isles. Conceive that for the last month I have been living there between 1786 and 1850, in my grandfather's diaries and letters. I *had* to take a rest; no use talking; so I put in a month over my *Lives of the Stevensons* with great pleasure and profit and some advance; one chapter and a part drafted. The whole promises well. Chapter I. Domestic Annals. Chapter II. The Northern Lights. Chapter III. The Bell Rock. Chapter IV. A Family of Boys. Chap. V. The Grandfather. VI. Alan Stevenson. VII. Thomas Stevenson. My materials for my great-grandfather are almost null; for my grandfather copious and excellent. Name, a puzzle. *A Scottish Family, A Family of Engineers, Northern Lights, The Engineers of the Northern Lights: A Family History.* Advise; but it will take long. Now, imagine if I have been homesick for Barrahead and Island Glass, and Kirkwall, and Cape Wrath, and the Wells of the Pentland Firth; I could have wept.

Now for politics. I am much less alarmed; I believe the *malo* (=*raj*, government) will collapse and cease like an overlain infant, without a shot fired. They have now been months here on their big salaries—and Cedercrantz, whom I specially like as a man, has done nearly nothing, and the Baron, who is well-meaning, has done worse. They have these large salaries, and they have all the taxes; they have made scarce a foot of road; they have not given a single native a position—all to white men; they have scarce laid out a penny on Apia, and scarce a penny on the King; they have forgot they were in Samoa, or that such a thing as Samoans existed, and had eyes and some intelligence. The Chief Justice has refused to pay his customs! The President proposed to have an

expensive house built for himself, while the King, his master, has none! I had stood aside, and been a loyal, and, above all, a silent subject, up to then; but now I snap my fingers at their *malo*. It is damned, and I'm damned glad of it. And this is not all. Last "*Wainiu*," when I sent Fanny off to Fiji, I hear the wonderful news that the Chief Justice is going to Fiji and the Colonies to improve his mind. I showed my way of thought to his guest, Count Wachtmeister, whom I have sent to you with a letter—he will tell you all the news. Well, the Chief Justice stayed, but they said he was to leave yesterday. I had intended to go down, and see and warn him! But the President's house had come up in the meanwhile, and I let them go to their doom, which I am only anxious to see swiftly and (if it may be) bloodlessly fall.

Thus I have in a way withdrawn my unrewarded loyalty. Lloyd is down to-day with Moors to call on Mataafa; the news of the excursion made a considerable row in Apia, and both the German and the English consuls besought Lloyd not to go. But he stuck to his purpose, and with my approval. It's a poor thing if people are to give up a pleasure party for a *malo* that has never done anything for us but draw taxes, and is going to go pop, and leave us at the mercy of the identical Mataafa, whom I have not visited for more than a year, and who is probably furious.

The sense of my helplessness here has been rather bitter; I feel it wretched to see this dance of folly and injustice and unconscious rapacity go forward from day to day, and to be impotent. I was not consulted—or only by one man, and that on particular points; I did not choose to volunteer advice till some pressing occasion; I have not even a vote, for I am not a member of the municipality.

What ails you, miserable man, to talk of saving material? I have a whole world in my head, a whole new society to work, but I am in no hurry; you will

shortly make the acquaintance of the Island of Ulufanua, on which I mean to lay several stories; the *Bloody Wedding*, possibly the *High Woods*—(O, it's so good, the *High Woods*, but the story is craziness; that's the trouble)—a political story, the *Labour Slave*, etc. Ulufanua is an imaginary island; the name is a beautiful Samoan word for the *top* of a forest; ulu=leaves or hair, fanua=land. The ground or country of the leaves. "Ulufanua the isle of the sea," read that verse dactylically and you get the beat; the u's are like our double oo; did ever you hear a prettier word?

I do not feel inclined to make a volume of Essays,[1] but if I did, and perhaps the idea is good—and any idea is better than the *South Seas*—here would be my choice of the Scribner articles: *Dreams*, *Beggars*, *Lantern-Bearers*, *Random Memories*. There was a paper called the *Old Pacific Capital* in Fraser, in Tulloch's time, which had merit; there were two on Fontainebleau in the Magazine of Art in Henley's time. I have no idea if they're any good; then there's the *Emigrant Train*. *Pulvis et Umbra* is in a different key, and wouldn't hang on with the rest.

I have just interrupted my letter and read through the chapter of the *High Woods* that is written, a chapter and a bit, some sixteen pages, really very fetching, but what do you wish? the story is so wilful, so steep, so silly—it's a hallucination I have outlived, and yet I never did a better piece of work, horrid, and pleasing, and extraordinarily *true*; it's sixteen pages of the South Seas; their essence. What am I to do? Lose this little gem—for I'll be bold, and that's what I think it—or go on with the rest, which I don't believe in, and don't like, and which can never make aught but a silly yarn? Make another end to it? Ah, yes, but that's not the way I write; the whole tale is implied; I never use an effect,

[1] In reply to a suggestion which ultimately took effect in the shape of the volume called *Across the Plains* (Chatto & Windus, 1892).

when I can help it, unless it prepares the effects that are to follow; that's what a story consists in. To make another end, that is to make the beginning all wrong. The dénouement of a long story is nothing; it is just a "full close," which you may approach and accompany as you please—it is a coda, not an essential member in the rhythm; but the body and end of a short story is bone of the bone and blood of the blood of the beginning. Well, I shall end by finishing it against my judgment; that fragment is my Delilah. Golly, it's good. I am not shining by modesty; but I do just love the colour and movement of that piece so far as it goes.

I was surprised to hear of your fishing. And you saw the *Pharos*,[1] thrice fortunate man; I wish I dared go home, I would ask the Commissioners to take me round for old sake's sake, and see all my family pictures once more from the Mull of Galloway to Unst. However, all is arranged for our meeting in Ceylon, except the date and the blooming pounds. I have heard of an exquisite hotel in the country, airy, large rooms, good cookery, not dear; we shall have a couple of months there, if we can make it out, and converse or—as my grandfather always said—"commune." "Communings with Mr. Kennedy as to Lighthouse Repairs." He was a fine old fellow, but a droll.

Evening.—Lloyd has returned. Peace and war were played before his eyes at heads or tails. A German was stopped with levelled guns; he raised his whip; had it fallen, we might have been now in war. Excuses were made by Mataafa himself. Doubtless the thing was done —I mean the stopping of the German—a little to show off before Lloyd. Meanwhile —— was up here, telling how the Chief Justice was really gone for five or eight weeks, and begging me to write to the Times and denounce

[1] The steam-yacht of the Commissioners of Northern Lights, on which he had been accustomed as a lad to accompany his father on the official trips of inspection round the coast.

the state of affairs; many strong reasons he advanced; and Lloyd and I have been since his arrival and ——'s departure, near half an hour, debating what should be done. Cedercrantz is gone; it is not my fault; he knows my views on that point—alone of all points;—he leaves me with my mouth sealed. Yet this is a nice thing that because he is guilty of a fresh offence—his flight—the mouth of the only possible influential witness should be closed? I do not like this argument. I look like a cad, if I do in the man's absence what I could have done in a more manly manner in his presence. True; but why did he go? It is his last sin. And I, who like the man extremely—that is the word—I love his society—he is intelligent, pleasant, even witty, a gentleman—and you know how that attaches—I loathe to seem to play a base part; but the poor natives—who are like other folk, false enough, lazy enough, not heroes, not saints—ordinary men damnably misused—are they to suffer because I like Cedercrantz, and Cedercrantz has cut his lucky? This is a little tragedy, observe well—a tragedy! I may be right, I may be wrong in my judgment, but I am in treaty with my honour. I know not how it will seem to-morrow. Lloyd thought the barrier of honour insurmountable, and it is an ugly obstacle. He (Cedercrantz) will likely meet my wife three days from now, may travel back with her, will be charming if he does; suppose this, and suppose him to arrive and find that I have sprung a mine—or the nearest approach to it I could find—behind his back? My position is pretty. Yes, I am an aristocrat. I have the old petty, personal view of honour? I should blush till I die if I do this; yet it is on the cards that I may do it. So much I have written you in bed, as a man writes or talks, in a *bittre Wahl.* Now I shall sleep, and see if I am more clear. I will consult the missionaries at least—I place some reliance in M. also—or I should if he were not a partisan; but a partisan he is. There's a pity. To sleep! A fund of wisdom in the prostrate body and the

fed brain. Kindly observe R. L. S. in the talons of politics! 'Tis funny—'tis sad. Nobody but these cursed idiots could have so driven me; I cannot bear idiots.

My dear Colvin, I must go to sleep; it is long past ten—a dreadful hour for me. And here am I lingering (so I feel) in the dining-room at the Monument, talking to you across the table, both on our feet, and only the two stairs to mount, and get to bed, and sleep, and be waked by dear old George—to whom I wish my kindest remembrances—next morning. I look round, and there is my blue room, and my long lines of shelves, and the door gaping on a moonless night, and no word of S. C. but his twa portraits on the wall. Good-bye, my dear fellow, and good-night. Queer place the world!

Monday.—No clearness of mind with the morning; I have no guess what I should do. 'Tis easy to say that the public duty should brush aside these little considerations of personal dignity; so it is that politicians begin, and in a month you find them rat and flatter and intrigue with brows of brass. I am rather of the old view, that a man's first duty is to these little laws; the big he does not, he never will, understand; I may be wrong about the Chief Justice and the Baron and the state of Samoa; I cannot be wrong about the vile attitude I put myself in if I blow the gaff on Cedercrantz behind his back.

Tuesday.—One more word about the *South Seas*, in answer to a question I observed I have forgotten to answer. The Tahiti part has never turned up, because it has never been written. As for telling you where I went or when, or anything about Honolulu, I would rather die; that is fair and plain. How can anybody care when or how I left Honolulu? A man of upwards of forty cannot waste his time in communicating matter of that indifference. The letters, it appears, are tedious; they would be more tedious still if I wasted my time upon such infantile and sucking-bottle details. If ever I put in any such detail, it is because it leads into something or serves as a transi-

tion. To tell it for its own sake, never! The mistake is all through that I have told too much; I had not sufficient confidence in the reader, and have overfed him; and here are you anxious to learn how I—O Colvin! Suppose it had made a book, all such information is given to one glance of an eye by a map with a little dotted line upon it. But let us forget this unfortunate affair.

Wednesday.—Yesterday I went down to consult Clarke, who took the view of delay. Has he changed his mind already? I wonder: here at least is the news. Some little while back some men of Manono—what is Manono? —a Samoan rotten borough, a small isle of huge political importance, heaven knows why, where a handful of chiefs make half the trouble in the country. Some men of Manono (which is strong Mataafa) burned down the houses and destroyed the crops of some Malietoa neighbours. The President went there the other day and landed alone on the island, which (to give him his due) was plucky. Moreover, he succeeded in persuading the folks to come up and be judged on a particular day in Apia. That day they did not come; but did come the next, and, to their vast surprise, were given six months' imprisonment and clapped in gaol. Those who had accompanied them cried to them on the streets as they were marched to prison, "Shall we rescue you?" The condemned, marching in the hands of thirty men with loaded rifles, cried out "No"! And the trick was done. But it was ardently believed a rescue would be attempted; the gaol was laid about with armed men day and night; but there was some question of their loyalty, and the commandant of the forces, a very nice young beardless Swede, became nervous, and conceived a plan. How if he should put dynamite under the gaol, and in case of an attempted rescue blow up prison and all? He went to the President, who agreed; he went to the American man-of-war for the dynamite and machine, was refused, and got it at last from the Wreckers. The thing began to leak out, and there arose a

muttering in town. People had no fancy for amateur explosions, for one thing. For another, it did not clearly appear that it was legal; the men had been condemned to six months' prison, which they were peaceably undergoing; they had not been condemned to death. And lastly, it seemed a somewhat advanced example of civilisation to set before barbarians. The mutter in short became a storm, and yesterday, while I was down, a cutter was chartered, and the prisoners were suddenly banished to the Tokelaus. Who has changed the sentence? We are going to stir in the dynamite matter; we do not want the natives to fancy us consenting to such an outrage.

Fanny has returned from her trip, and on the whole looks better. The *High Woods* are under way, and their name is now the *Beach of Falesá*, and the yarn is cured. I have about thirty pages of it done; it will be fifty to seventy I suppose. No supernatural trick at all; and escaped out of it quite easily; can't think why I was so stupid for so long. Mighty glad to have Fanny back to this "Hell of the South Seas," as the German Captain called it. What will Cedercrantz think when he comes back? To do him justice, had he been here, this Manono hash would not have been.

Here is a pretty thing. When Fanny was in Fiji all the Samoa and Tokelau folks were agog about our "flash" house; but the whites had never heard of it.

Robert Louis Stevenson,
Author of *The Beach of Falesá*.

To Sidney Colvin

[*Vailima*], *Sept.* 28, 1891.

my dear colvin,—Since I last laid down my pen, I have written and rewritten *The Beach of Falesá;* something like sixty thousand words of sterling domestic fiction (the story, you will understand, is only half that

length); and now I don't want to write any more again for ever, or feel so; and I've got to overhaul it once again to my sorrow. I was all yesterday revising, and found a lot of slacknesses and (what is worse in this kind of thing) some literaryisms. One of the puzzles is this: It is a first person story—a trader telling his own adventure in an island. When I began I allowed myself a few liberties, because I was afraid of the end; now the end proved quite easy, and could be done in the pace; so the beginning remains about a quarter tone out (in places); but I have rather decided to let it stay so. The problem is always delicate; it is the only thing that worries me in first person tales, which otherwise (quo' Alan) "set better wi' my genius." There is a vast deal of fact in the story, and some pretty good comedy. It is the first realistic South Sea story; I mean with real South Sea character and details of life. Everybody else who has tried, that I have seen, got carried away by the romance, and ended in a kind of sugar candy sham epic, and the whole effect was lost—there was no etching, no human grin, consequently no conviction. Now I have got the smell and look of the thing a good deal. You will know more about the South Seas after you have read my little tale than if you had read a library. As to whether any one else will read it, I have no guess. I am in an off time, but there is just the possibility it might make a hit; for the yarn is good and melodramatic, and there is quite a love affair—for me; and Mr. Wiltshire (the narrator) is a huge lark, though I say it. But there is always the exotic question, and everything, the life, the place, the dialects—trader's talk, which is a strange conglomerate of literary expressions and English and American slang, and Beach de Mar, or native English,—the very trades and hopes and fears of the characters, are all novel, and may be found unwelcome to that great, hulking, bullering whale, the public.

Since I wrote, I have been likewise drawing up a

document to send in to the President; it has been dreadfully delayed, not by me, but to-day they swear it will be sent in. A list of questions about the dynamite report are herein laid before him, and considerations suggested why he should answer.

October 5th.—Ever since my last snatch I have been much chivied about over the President business; his answer has come, and is an evasion accompanied with schoolboy insolence, and we are going to try to answer it. I drew my answer and took it down yesterday; but one of the signatories wants another paragraph added, which I have not yet been able to draw, and as to the wisdom of which I am not yet convinced.

Next day, Oct. 7th the right day.—We are all in rather a muddled state with our President affair. I do loathe politics, but at the same time, I cannot stand by and have the natives blown in the air treacherously with dynamite. They are still quiet; how long this may continue I do not know, though of course by mere prescription the Government is strengthened, and is probably insured till the next taxes fall due. But the unpopularity of the whites is growing. My native overseer, the great Henry Simelé, announced to-day that he was "weary of whites upon the beach. All too proud," said this veracious witness. One of the proud ones had threatened yesterday to cut off his head with a bush knife! These are "native outrages"; honour bright, and setting theft aside, in which the natives are active, this is the main stream of irritation. The natives are generally courtly, far from always civil, but really gentle, and with a strong sense of honour of their own, and certainly quite as much civilised as our dynamiting President.

We shall be delighted to see Kipling.[1] I go to bed

[1] Mr. Rudyard Kipling was at this time planning a trip to Samoa, but the plan was unfortunately not carried out, and he and Stevenson never met.

usually about half-past eight, and my lamp is out before ten; I breakfast at six. We may say roughly we have no soda water on the island, and just now truthfully no whisky. I *have* heard the chimes at midnight; now no more, I guess. *But*—Fanny and I, as soon as we can get coins for it, are coming to Europe, not to England: I am thinking of Royat. Bar wars. If not, perhaps the Apennines might give us a mountain refuge for two months or three in summer. How is that for high? But the money must be all in hand first.

October 13th.—How am I to describe my life these last few days? I have been wholly swallowed up in politics, a wretched business, with fine elements of farce in it too, which repay a man in passing, involving many dark and many moonlight rides, secret counsels which are at once divulged, sealed letters which are read aloud in confidence to the neighbours, and a mass of fudge and fun, which would have driven me crazy ten years ago, and now makes me smile.

On Friday, Henry came and told us he must leave and go to "my poor old family in Savaii"; why? I do not quite know—but, I suspect, to be tattooed—if so, then probably to be married, and we shall see him no more. I told him he must do what he thought his duty; we had him to lunch, drank his health, and he and I rode down about twelve. When I got down, I sent my horse back to help bring down the family later. My own afternoon was cut out for me; my last draft for the President had been objected to by some of the signatories. I stood out, and one of our small number accordingly refused to sign. Him I had to go and persuade, which went off very well after the first hottish moments; you have no idea how stolid my temper is now. By about five the thing was done; and we sat down to dinner at the Chinaman's—the Verrey or Doyen of Apia—Gurr and I at each end as hosts; Gurr's wife—Fanua, late maid of the village; her (adopted) father and mother, Seumanu and

Faatulia, Fanny, Belle, Lloyd, Austin, and Henry Simelé, his last appearance. Henry was in a kilt of grey shawl, with a blue jacket, white shirt, and black necktie, and looked like a dark genteel guest in a Highland shooting-box. Seumanu (opposite Fanny, next G.) is chief of Apia, a rather big gun in this place, looking like a large, fatted, military Englishman, bar the colour. Faatulia, next me, is a bigger chief than her husband. Henry is a chief too—his chief name, Iiga (Ee-eeng-a), he has not yet "taken" because of his youth. We were in fine society, and had a pleasant meal-time, with lots of fun. Then to the Opera—I beg your pardon, I mean the Circus. We occupied the first row in the reserved seats, and there in the row behind were all our friends—Captain Foss and his Captain-Lieutenant, three of the American officers, very nice fellows, the Dr., etc., so we made a fine show of what an embittered correspondent of the local paper called "the shoddy aristocracy of Apia"; and you should have seen how we carried on, and how I clapped, and Captain Foss hollered "*wunderschön!*" and threw himself forward in his seat, and how we all in fact enjoyed ourselves like school-children, Austin not a shade more than his neighbours. Then the Circus broke up, and the party went home, but I stayed down, having business on the morrow.

Yesterday, October 12th, great news reaches me, and Lloyd and I, with the mail just coming in, must leave all, saddle, and ride down. True enough, the President had resigned! Sought to resign his presidency of the council, and keep his adviserships to the King; given way to the consuls' objections and resigned all—then fell out with them about the disposition of the funds, and was now trying to resign from his resignation! Sad little President, so trim to look at, and I believe so kind to his little wife! Not only so, but I meet Dunnet on the beach. Dunnet calls me in consultation, and we make with infinite difficulty a draft of a petition to the King. . . .

Then to dinner at Moors's, a very merry meal, interrupted before it was over by the arrival of the committee. Slight sketch of procedure agreed upon, self appointed spokesman, and the deputation sets off. Walk all through Matafele, all along Mulinuu, come to the King's house; he has verbally refused to see us in answer to our letter, swearing he is gasegase (chief sickness, not common man's) and indeed we see him inside in bed. It is a miserable low house, better houses by the dozen in the little hamlet (Tanugamanono) of bushmen on our way to Vailima; and the President's house in process of erection just opposite! We are told to return to-morrow; I refuse; and at last we are very sourly received, sit on the mats, and I open out, through a very poor interpreter, and sometimes hampered by unacceptable counsels from my backers. I can speak fairly well in a plain way now. C. asked me to write out my harangue for him this morning; I have done so, and couldn't get it near as good. I suppose (talking and interpreting) I was twenty minutes or half an hour on the deck; then his majesty replied in the dying whisper of a big chief; a few words of rejoinder (approving), and the deputation withdrew, rather well satisfied.

A few days ago this intervention would have been a deportable offence; not now, I bet; I would like them to try. A little way back along Mulinuu, Mrs. Gurr met us with her husband's horse; and he and she and Lloyd and I rode back in a heavenly moonlight. Here ends a chapter in the life of an island politician! Catch me at it again; 'tis easy to go in, but it is not a pleasant trade. I have had a good team, as good as I could get on the beach; but what trouble even so, and what fresh troubles shaping. But I have on the whole carried all my points; I believe all but one, and on that (which did not concern me) I had no right to interfere. I am sure you would be amazed if you knew what a good hand I am at keeping my temper, talking people over, and giving reasons which are not my reasons, but calculated for the meridian of

the particular objection; so soon does falsehood await the politician in his whirling path.

To Henry James

Stevenson had again been reading Mr. James's *Lesson of the Master;* Adela Chart is the heroine of the second story in that collection, called *The Marriages.*

[*Vailima, October* 1891.]

MY DEAR HENRY JAMES,—From this perturbed and hunted being expect but a line, and that line shall be but a whoop for Adela. O she's delicious, delicious; I could live and die with Adela—die, rather the better of the two; you never did a straighter thing, and never will.

David Balfour, second part of *Kidnapped,* is on the stocks at last; and is not bad, I think. As for *The Wrecker,* it's a machine, you know—don't expect aught else—a machine, and a police machine; but I believe the end is one of the most genuine butcheries in literature; and we point to our machine with a modest pride, as the only police machine without a villain. Our criminals are a most pleasing crew, and leave the dock with scarce a stain upon their character.

What a different line of country to be trying to draw Adela, and trying to write the last four chapters of *The Wrecker!* Heavens, it's like two centuries; and ours is such rude, transpontine business, aiming only at a certain fervour of conviction and sense of energy and violence in the men; and yours is so neat and bright and of so exquisite a surface! Seems dreadful to send such a book to such an author; but your name is on the list. And we do modestly ask you to consider the chapters on the *Norah Creina* with the study of Captain Nares, and the forementioned last four, with their brutality of substance and the curious (and perhaps unsound) technical manœuvre of running the story together to a point as we go

along, the narrative becoming more succinct and the details fining off with every page.—Sworn affidavit of

R. L. S.

No person now alive has beaten Adela: I adore Adela and her maker. Sic subscrib.

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

A Sublime Poem to follow.

Adela, Adela, Adela Chart,
What have you done to my elderly heart?
Of all the ladies of paper and ink
I count you the paragon, call you the pink.
The word of your brother depicts you in part:
"You raving maniac!" Adela Chart;
But in all the asylums that cumber the ground,
So delightful a maniac was ne'er to be found.

I pore on you, dote on you, clasp you to heart,
I laud, love, and laugh at you, Adela Chart,
And thank my dear maker the while I admire
That I can be neither your husband nor sire.

Your husband's, your sire's were a difficult part;
You're a byway to suicide, Adela Chart;
But to read of, depicted by exquisite James,
O, sure you're the flower and quintessence of dames.

R. L. S.

Eructavit cor meum

My heart was inditing a goodly matter about Adela Chart.

Though oft I've been touched by the volatile dart,
To none have I grovelled but Adela Chart,
There are passable ladies, no question, in art—
But where is the marrow of Adela Chart?

I dreamed that to Tyburn I passed in the cart—
I dreamed I was married to Adela Chart:
From the first I awoke with a palpable start,
The second dumbfoundered me, Adela Chart!

Another verse bursts from me, you see; no end to the violence of the Muse.

To E. L. Burlingame

[*Vailima*], *October 8th*, 1891.

MY DEAR BURLINGAME,—All right, you shall have the *Tales of my Grandfather* soon, but I guess we'll try and finish off *The Wrecker* first. *A propos* of whom, please send some advanced sheets to Cassell's—away ahead of you—so that they may get a dummy out.

Do you wish to illustrate *My Grandfather?* He mentions as excellent a portrait of Scott by Basil Hall's brother. I don't think I ever saw this engraved; would it not, if you could get track of it, prove a taking embellishment? I suggest this for your consideration and inquiry. A new portrait of Scott strikes me as good. There is a hard, tough, constipated old portrait of my grandfather hanging in my aunt's house, Mrs. Alan Stevenson, 16 St. Leonard's Terrace, Chelsea, which has never been engraved—the better portrait, Joseph's bust, has been reproduced, I believe, twice—and which, I am sure, my aunt would let you have a copy of. The plate could be of use for the book when we get so far, and thus to place it in the Magazine might be an actual saving.

I am swallowed up in politics for the first, I hope for the last, time in my sublunary career. It is a painful, thankless trade; but one thing that came up I could not pass in silence. Much drafting, addressing, deputationising has eaten up all my time, and again (to my contrition)

I leave you Wreckerless. As soon as the mail leaves I tackle it straight.—Yours very sincerely,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

To E. L. BURLINGAME

[*Vailima, October* 1891.]

MY DEAR BURLINGAME,—The time draws nigh, the mail is near due, and I snatch a moment of collapse so that you may have at least some sort of a scratch of note along with the

end
of
The
Wrecker.

Hurray! which I mean to go herewith. It has taken me a devil of a pull, but I think it's going to be ready. If I did not know you were on the stretch waiting for it and trembling for your illustrations, I would keep it for another finish; but things being as they are, I will let it go the best way I can get it. I am now within two pages of the end of Chapter xxv., which is the last chapter, the end with its gathering up of loose threads, being the dedication to Low, and addressed to him; this is my last and best expedient for the knotting up of these loose cards. 'Tis possible I may not get that finished in time, in which case you'll receive only Chapters xxii. to xxv. by this mail, which is all that can be required for illustration.

I wish you would send me *Memoirs of Baron Marbot* (French); *Introduction to the Study of the History of Language*, Strong, Logeman & Wheeler; *Principles of Psychology*, William James; Morris & Magnusson's *Saga Library*, any volumes that are out; George Meredith's *One of our Conquerors; Là Bas*, by Huysmans (French); O'Connor Morris's *Great Commanders of Modern Times; Life's Handicap*, by Kipling; of Taine's *Origines de la*

France Contemporaine, I have only as far as *la Révolution*, vol. iii. ; if another volume is out, please add that. There is for a book-box.

I hope you will like the end ; I think it is rather strong meat. I have got into such a deliberate, dilatory, expansive turn, that the effort to compress this last yarn was unwelcome ; but the longest yarn has to come to an end some time. Please look it over for carelessnesses, and tell me if it had any effect upon your jaded editorial mind. I'll see if ever I have time to add more.

I add to my book-box list Adams' *Historical Essays ;* the Plays of A. W. Pinero—all that have appeared, and send me the rest in course as they do appear ; *Noughts and Crosses* by Q. ; Robertson's *Scotland under her Early Kings.*

Sunday.—The deed is done, didst thou not hear a noise ? " The end " has been written to this endless yarn, and I am once more a free man. What will he do with it ?

To Sidney Colvin

[*Vailima*] *Monday, October 24th.*

MY DEAR CARTHEW,[1]—See what I have written, but it's Colvin I'm after—I have written two chapters, about thirty pages of *Wrecker* since the mail left, which must be my excuse, and the bother I've had with it is not to be imagined ; you might have seen me the day before yesterday weighing British sov.'s and Chili dollars to arrange my treasure chest. And there was such a calculation, not for that only, but for the ship's position and distances when—but I am not going to tell you the yarn —and then, as my arithmetic is particularly lax, Lloyd had to go over all my calculations ; and then, as I had

[1] Readers of *The Wrecker* will not need to be reminded that this is the name of the personage on whom the mystery in that story hinges.

changed the amount of money, he had to go over all *his* as to the amount of the lay; and altogether, a bank could be run with less effusion of figures than it took to shore up a single chapter of a measly yarn. However, it's done, and I have but one more, or at the outside two, to do, and I am Free! and can do any damn thing I like.

Before falling on politics, I shall give you my day. Awoke somewhere about the first peep of day, came gradually to, and had a turn on the verandah before 5.55, when "the child" (an enormous Wallis Islander) brings me an orange; at 6, breakfast; 6.10, to work; which lasts till, at 10.30, Austin comes for his history lecture; this is rather dispiriting, but education must be gone about in faith—and charity, both of which pretty nigh failed me to-day about (of all things) Carthage; 11, luncheon; after luncheon in my mother's room, I read Chapter XXIII. of *The Wrecker*, then Belle, Lloyd, and I go up and make music furiously till about 2 (I suppose), when I turn into work again till 4; fool from 4 to half-past, tired out and waiting for the bath hour; 4.30, bath; 4.40, eat two heavenly mangoes on the verandah, and see the boys arrive with the pack-horses; 5, dinner; smoke, chat on verandah, then hand of cards, and at last at 8 come up to my room with a pint of beer and a hard biscuit, which I am now consuming, and as soon as they are consumed I shall turn in.

Such are the innocent days of this ancient and outworn sportsman; to-day there was no weeding, usually there is however, edged in somewhere. My books for the moment are a crib to Phædo, and the second book of Montaigne; and a little while back I was reading Frederic Harrison, *Choice of Books*, etc.—very good indeed, a great deal of sense and knowledge in the volume, and some very true stuff, *contra* Carlyle, about the eighteenth century. A hideous idea came over me that perhaps Harrison is now getting *old*. Perhaps you are. Perhaps I am. Oh, this infidelity must be stared firmly down.

I am about twenty-three—say twenty-eight; you about thirty, or, by'r lady, thirty-four; and as Harrison belongs to the same generation, there is no good bothering about him.

Here has just been a fine alert; I gave my wife a dose of chlorodyne. "Something wrong," says she. "Nonsense," said I. "Embrocation," said she. I smelt it, and—it smelt very funny. "I think it's just gone bad, and to-morrow will tell." Proved to be so.

Wednesday.—History of Tuesday.—Woke at usual time, very little work, for I was tired, and had a job for the evening—to write parts for a new instrument, a violin. Lunch, chat, and up to my place to practise; but there was no practising for me—my flageolet was gone wrong, and I had to take it all to pieces, clean it, and put it up again. As this is a most intricate job—the thing dissolves into seventeen separate members, most of these have to be fitted on their individual springs as fine as needles, and sometimes two at once with the springs shoving different ways—it took me till two. Then Lloyd and I rode forth on our errands; first to Motootua, where we had a really instructive conversation on weeds and grasses. Thence down to Apia, where we bought a fresh bottle of chlorodyne and conversed on politics.

My visit to the King, which I thought at the time a particularly nugatory and even schoolboy step, and only consented to because I had held the reins so tight over my little band before, has raised a deuce of a row—new proclamation, no one is to interview the sacred puppet without consuls' permission, two days' notice, and an approved interpreter—read (I suppose) spy. Then back; I should have said I was trying the new horse; a tallish piebald, bought from the circus; he proved steady and safe, but in very bad condition, and not so much the wild Arab steed of the desert as had been supposed. The height of his back, after commodious Jack, astonished me, and I had a great consciousness of exercise and florid

action, as I posted to his long, emphatic trot. We had to ride back easy; even so he was hot and blown; and when we set a boy to lead him to and fro, our last character for sanity perished. We returned just neat for dinner; and in the evening our violinist arrived, a young lady, no great virtuoso truly, but plucky, industrious, and a good reader; and we played five pieces with huge amusement, and broke up at nine. This morning I have read a splendid piece of Montaigne, written this page of letter, and now turn to *The Wrecker*.

Wednesday.—November 16th or 17th—and I am ashamed to say mail day. *The Wrecker* is finished, that is the best of my news; it goes by this mail to Scribner's; and I honestly think it a good yarn on the whole and of its measly kind. The part that is genuinely good is Nares, the American sailor; that is a genuine figure; had there been more Nares it would have been a better book; but of course it didn't set up to be a book, only a long tough yarn with some pictures of the manners of to-day in the greater world—not the shoddy sham world of cities, clubs, and colleges, but the world where men still live a man's life. The worst of my news is the influenza; Apia is devastate; the shops closed, a ball put off, etc. As yet we have not had it at Vailima, and, who knows? we may escape. None of us go down, but of course the boys come and go.

Your letter had the most wonderful "I told you so" I ever heard in the course of my life. Why, you madman, I wouldn't change my present installation for any post, dignity, honour, or advantage conceivable to me. It fills the bill; I have the loveliest time. And as for wars and rumours of wars, you surely know enough of me to be aware that I like that also a thousand times better than decrepit peace in Middlesex? I do not quite like politics; I am too aristocratic, I fear, for that. God knows I don't care who I chum with; perhaps like sailors best; but to go round and sue and sneak to keep a crowd

together—never. My imagination, which is not the least damped by the idea of having my head cut off in the bush, recoils aghast from the idea of a life like Gladstone's, and the shadow of the newspaper chills me to the bone. Hence my late eruption was interesting, but not what I like. All else suits me in this (killed a mosquito) A1 abode.

About politics. A determination was come to by the President that he had been an idiot; emissaries came to Gurr and me to kiss and be friends. My man proposed I should have a personal interview; I said it was quite useless, I had nothing to say; I had offered him the chance to inform me, had pressed it on him, and had been very unpleasantly received, and now "Time was." Then it was decided that I was to be made a culprit against Germany; the German Captain—a delightful fellow and our constant visitor—wrote to say that as "a German officer" he could not come even to say farewell. We all wrote back in the most friendly spirit, telling him (politely) that some of these days he would be sorry, and we should be delighted to see our friend again. Since then I have seen no German shadow.

Mataafa has been proclaimed a rebel; the President did this act, and then resigned. By singular good fortune, Mataafa has not yet moved; no thanks to our idiot governors. They have shot their bolt; they have made a rebel of the only man (*to their own knowledge, on the report of their own spy*) who held the rebel party in check; and having thus called on war to fall, they can do no more, sit equally "expertes" of *vis* and counsel, regarding their handiwork. It is always a cry with these folks that he (Mataafa) had no ammunition. I always said it would be found; and we know of five boat-loads that have found their way to Malie already. Where there are traders, there will be ammunition; aphorism by R. L. S.

Now what am I to do next?

Lives of the Stevensons? *Historia Samoae?* A History

for Children? Fiction? I have had two hard months at fiction; I want a change. Stevensons? I am expecting some more material; perhaps better wait. Samoa? rather tempting; might be useful to the islands—and to me; for it will be written in admirable temper; I have never agreed with any party, and see merits and excuses in all; should do it (if I did) very slackly and easily, as if half in conversation. History for Children? This flows from my lessons to Austin; no book is any good. The best I have seen is Freeman's *Old English History;* but his style is so rasping, and a child can learn more, if he's clever. I found my sketch of general Aryan history, given in conversation, to have been practically correct—at least what I mean is, Freeman had very much the same stuff in his early chapters, only not so much, and I thought not so well placed; and the child remembered some of it. Now the difficulty is to give this general idea of main place, growth, and movement; it is needful to tack it on a yarn. Now Scotch is the only history I know; it is the only history reasonably represented in my library; it is a very good one for my purpose, owing to two civilisations having been face to face throughout—or rather Roman civilisation face to face with our ancient barbaric life and government, down to yesterday, to 1750 anyway. But the *Tales of a Grandfather* stand in my way; I am teaching them to Austin now, and they have all Scott's defects and all Scott's hopeless merit. I cannot compete with that; and yet, so far as regards teaching History, how he has missed his chances! I think I'll try; I really have some historic sense, I feel that in my bones. Then there's another thing. Scott never knew the Highlands; he was always a Borderer. He has missed that whole, long, strange, pathetic story of our savages, and, besides, his style is not very perspicuous to childhood. Gad, I think I'll have a flutter. Buridan's Ass! Whither to go, what to attack. Must go to other letters; shall add to this, if I have time.

To W. Craibe Angus

Vailima, Samoa, November 1891.

MY DEAR MR. ANGUS,—Herewith the invaluable sheets. They came months after your letter, and I trembled ; but here they are, and I have scrawled my vile name on them, and "thocht shame" as I did it. I am expecting the sheets of your catalogue, so that I may attack the preface. Please give me all the time you can. The sooner the better ; you might even send me early proofs as they are sent out, to give me more incubation. I used to write as slow as judgment ; now I write rather fast ; but I am still "a slow study," and sit a long while silent on my eggs. Unconscious thought, there is the only method : macerate your subject, let it boil slow, then take the lid off and look in—and there your stuff is, good or bad. But the journalist's method is the way to manufacture lies ; it is will-worship—if you know the luminous quaker phrase ; and the will is only to be brought in the field for study and again for revision. The essential part of work is not an act, it is a state.

I do not know why I write you this trash.

Many thanks for your handsome dedication. I have not yet had time to do more than glance at Mrs. Begg ; it looks interesting.—Yours very truly,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Miss Annie H. Ide

Vailima, Samoa [*November* 1891].

MY DEAR LOUISA,—Your picture of the church, the photograph of yourself and your sister, and your very witty and pleasing letter, came all in a bundle, and made me feel I had my money's worth for that birthday. I am now, I must be, one of your nearest relatives ; exactly

what we are to each other, I do not know, I doubt if the case has ever happened before—your papa ought to know, and I don't believe he does; but I think I ought to call you in the meanwhile, and until we get the advice of counsel learned in the law, my name-daughter. Well, I was extremely pleased to see by the church that my name-daughter could draw; by the letter, that she was no fool; and by the photograph, that she was a pretty girl, which hurts nothing. See how virtues are rewarded! My first idea of adopting you was entirely charitable; and here I find that I am quite proud of it, and of you, and that I chose just the kind of name-daughter I wanted. For I can draw too, or rather I mean to say I could before I forgot how; and I am very far from being a fool myself, however much I may look it; and I am as beautiful as the day, or at least I once hoped that perhaps I might be going to be. And so I might. So that you see we are well met, and peers on these important points. I am very glad also that you are older than your sister. So should I have been, if I had had one. So that the number of points and virtues which you have inherited from your name-father is already quite surprising.

I wish you would tell your father—not that I like to encourage my rival—that we have had a wonderful time here of late, and that they are having a cold day on Mulinuu, and the consuls are writing reports, and I am writing to the Times, and if we don't get rid of our friends this time I shall begin to despair of everything but my name-daughter.

You are quite wrong as to the effect of the birthday on your age. From the moment the deed was registered (as it was in the public press with every solemnity), the 13th of November became your own *and only* birthday, and you ceased to have been born on Christmas Day. Ask your father: I am sure he will tell you this is sound law. You are thus become a month and twelve days younger than you were, but will go on growing older for

the future in the regular and human manner from one 13th November to the next. The effect on me is more doubtful; I may, as you suggest, live for ever; I might, on the other hand, come to pieces like the one-horse shay at a moment's notice; doubtless the step was risky, but I do not the least regret that which enables me to sign myself your revered and delighted name-father,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

To Charles Baxter

[*Vailima, November* 1891.]

DEAR CHARLES,—[After dealing with some matters of business] I believe that's a'. By this time, I suppose you will have heard from McClure, and the *Beach of Falesá* will be decided on for better for worse. The end of *The Wrecker* goes by this mail, an awfae relief. I am now free and can do what I please. What do I please? I kenna. I'll bide a wee. There's a child's history in the wind; and there's my grandfather's life begun; and there's a hist[ry] of Samoa in the last four or five years begun—there's a kind of sense to this book; it may help the Samoans, it may help me, for I am bound on the altar here for anti-Germanism. Then there's *The Pearl Fisher* about a quarter done; and there's various short stories in various degrees of incompleteness. De'il, there's plenty grist; but the mill's unco slaw! To-morrow or next day, when the mail's through, I'll attack one or other, or maybe something else. All these schemes begin to laugh at me, for the day's far through, and I believe the pen grows heavy. However, I believe *The Wrecker* is a good yarn of its poor sort, and it is certainly well nourished with facts; no realist can touch me there; for by this time I do begin to know something of life in the XIXth century, which no novelist either in France or England seems to know much of. You must have great larks over masonry.

You're away up in the ranks now and (according to works that I have read) doubtless design assassinations. But I am an outsider; and I have a certain liking for a light unto my path which would deter me from joining the rank and file of so vast and dim a confraternity. At your altitude it becomes (of course) amusing and perhaps useful. Yes, I remember the L.J.R.,[1] and the constitution, and my homily on Liberty, and yours on Reverence, which was never written—so I never knew what reverence was. I remember I wanted to write Justice also; but I forget who had the billet. My dear papa was in a devil of a taking; and I had to go and lunch at Ferrier's in a strangely begrutten state, which was *infra dig.* for a homilist on liberty. It was about four, I suppose, that we met in the Lothian Road,—had we the price of two bitters between us? questionable!

Your bookseller (I have lost his letter, I mean the maid has, arranging my room, and so have to send by you) wrote me a letter about Old Bailey Papers. Gosh, I near swarfed; dam'd, man, I near had dee'd o't. It's only yin or twa volumes I want; say 500 or 1000 pages of the stuff; and the worthy man (much doubting) proposed to bury me in volumes. Please allay his rage, and apologise that I have not written him direct. His note was civil and purposeiike. And please send me a copy of Henley's *Book of Verses;* mine has disappeared.

R. L. S.

To Sidney Colvin

Nov. 25th, 1891.

MY DEAR COLVIN, MY DEAR COLVIN,—I wonder how often I'm going to write it. In spite of the loss of three days, as I have to tell, and a lot of weeding and cacao planting, I have finished since the mail left four chapters,

[1] See vol. xxiii. pp. 46, 48.

forty-eight pages of my Samoa history. It is true that the first three had been a good deal drafted two years ago, but they had all to be written and re-written, and the fourth chapter is all new. Chapter I. Elements of Discord —Native. II. Elements of Discord—Foreign. III. The Success of Laupepa. IV. Brandeis. V. Will probably be called "The Rise of Mataafa." VI. *Furor Consularis*—a devil of a long chapter. VII. Stuebel the Pacificator. VIII. Government under the Treaty of Berlin. IX. Practical Suggestions. Say three-sixths of it are done, maybe more; by this mail five chapters should go, and that should be a good half of it; say sixty pages. And if you consider that I sent by last mail the end of *The Wrecker*, coming on for seventy or eighty pages, and the mail before that the entire tale of the *Beach of Falesá*, I do not think I can be accused of idleness. This is my season; I often work six and seven, and sometimes eight hours; and the same day I am perhaps weeding or planting for an hour or two more—and I dare say you know what hard work weeding is—and it all agrees with me at this time of the year—like—like idleness, if a man of my years could be idle.

My first visit to Apia was a shock to me; every second person the ghost of himself, and the place reeking with infection. But I have not got the thing yet, and hope to escape. This shows how much stronger I am; think of me flitting through a town of influenza patients seemingly unscathed. We are all on the cacao planting.

The next day my wife and I rode over to the German plantation, Vailele, whose manager is almost the only German left to speak to us. Seventy labourers down with influenza! It is a lovely ride, half-way down our mountain towards Apia, then turn to the right, ford the river, and three miles of solitary grass and cocoa palms, to where the sea beats and the wild wind blows unceasingly about the plantation house. On the way down Fanny said, "Now what would you do if you saw Colvin coming up?"

Next day we rode down to Apia to make calls.

Yesterday the mail came, and the fat was in the fire.

Nov. 29th (?).—Book.[1] All right. I must say I like your order. And the papers are some of them up to dick, and no mistake. I agree with you the lights seem a little turned down. The truth is, I was far through (if you understand Scots), and came none too soon to the South Seas, where I was to recover peace of body and mind. No man but myself knew all my bitterness in those days. Remember that, the next time you think I regret my exile. And however low the lights are, the stuff is true, and I believe the more effective; after all, what I wish to fight is the best fought by a rather cheerless presentation of the truth. The world must return some day to the word duty, and be done with the word reward. There are no rewards, and plenty duties. And the sooner a man sees that and acts upon it like a gentleman or a fine old barbarian, the better for himself.

There is my usual puzzle about publishers. Chatto ought to have it, as he has all the other essays; these all belong to me, and Chatto publishes on terms. Longman has forgotten the terms we are on; let him look up our first correspondence, and he will see I reserved explicitly, as was my habit, the right to republish as I choose. Had the same arrangement with Henley, Magazine of Art, and with Tulloch, Fraser's.—For any necessary note or preface, it would be a real service if you would undertake the duty yourself. I should love a preface by you, as short or as long as you choose, three sentences, thirty pages, the thing I should like is your name. And the excuse of my great distance seems sufficient. I shall return with this the sheets corrected as far as I have them; the rest I will leave, if you will, to you entirely; let it be your book, and disclaim what you dislike in the preface. You can

[1] *Across the Plains.* The papers specially referred to in the next lines are those written at Saranac Lake in the winter of 1887–88, including *A Letter to a Young Gentleman, Pulvis et Umbra, A Christmas Sermon.*

say it was at my eager prayer. I should say I am the less willing to pass Chatto over, because he behaved the other day in a very handsome manner. He asked leave to reprint *Damien;* I gave it to him as a present, explaining I could receive no emolument for a personal attack. And he took out my share of profits, and sent them in my name to the Leper Fund. I could not bear after that to take from him any of that class of books which I have always given him. Tell him the same terms will do. Clark to print, uniform with the others.

I have lost all the days since this letter began rehandling Chapter IV. of the Samoa racket. I do not go in for literature; address myself to sensible people rather than to sensitive. And, indeed, it is a kind of journalism, I have no right to dally; if it is to help, it must come soon. In two months from now it shall be done, and should be published in the course of March. I propose Cassell gets it. I am going to call it *A Footnote to History: Eight Years of Trouble in Samoa*, I believe. I recoil from serious names; they seem so much too pretentious for a pamphlet. It will be about the size of *Treasure Island*, I believe. Of course, as you now know, my case of conscience cleared itself off, and I began my intervention directly to one of the parties. The other, the Chief Justice, I am to inform of my book the first occasion. God knows if the book will do any good—or harm; but I judge it right to try. There is one man's life certainly involved; and it may be all our lives. I must not stand and slouch, but do my best as best I can. But you may conceive the difficulty of a history extending to the present week, at least, and where almost all the actors upon all sides are of my personal acquaintance. The only way is to judge slowly, and write boldly, and leave the issue to fate. . . . I am far indeed from wishing to confine myself to creative work; that is a loss, the other repairs; the one chance for a man, and, above all, for one who grows elderly, ahem, is to vary drainage and repair. That is the one thing I

understand—the cultivation of the shallow *solum* of my brain. But I would rather, from soon on, be released from the obligation to write. In five or six years this plantation —suppose it and us still to exist—should pretty well support us and pay wages; not before, and already the six years seem long to me. If literature were but a pastime!

I have interrupted myself to write the necessary notification to the Chief Justice.

I see in looking up Longman's letter that it was as usual the letter of an obliging gentleman; so do not trouble him with my reminder. I wish all my publishers were not so nice. And I have a fourth and a fifth baying at my heels; but for these, of course, they must go wanting.

Dec. 2nd.—No answer from the Chief Justice, which is like him, but surely very wrong in such a case. The lunch bell! I have been off work, playing patience and weeding all morning. Yesterday and the day before I drafted eleven and revised nine pages of Chapter v., and the truth is, I was extinct by lunch-time, and played patience sourly the rest of the day. To-morrow or next day I hope to go in again and win. Lunch 2nd Bell.

Dec. 2nd, afternoon.—I have kept up the idleness; blew on the pipe to Belle's piano; then had a ride in the forest all by my nainsel; back and piped again, and now dinner nearing. Take up this sheet with nothing to say. The weird figure of Faauma is in the room washing my windows, in a black lavalava (kilt) with a red handkerchief hanging from round her neck between her breasts; not another stitch; her hair close cropped and oiled; when she first came here she was an angelic little stripling, but she is now in full flower—or half-flower—and grows buxom. As I write, I hear her wet cloth moving and grunting with some industry; for I had a word this day with her husband on the matter of work and meal-time, when she is always late. And she has a vague reverence for Papa, as she and her enormous husband address me when anything is wrong. Her husband is Lafaele, sometimes called the

archangel, of whom I have writ you often. Rest of our household, Talolo, cook; Pulu, kitchen boy, good, steady, industrious lads; Henry, back again from Savaii, where his love affair seems not to have prospered, with what looks like a spear-wound in the back of his head, of which Mr. Reticence says nothing; Simi, Manuele, and two other labourers outdoors. Lafaele is provost of the live-stock, whereof now, three milk-cows, one bull-calf, one heifer, Jack, Macfarlane, the mare, Harold, Tifaga Jack, Donald and Edinburgh—seven horses—O, and the stallion—eight horses; five cattle; total, if my arithmetic be correct, thirteen head of beasts; I don't know how the pigs stand, or the ducks, or the chickens; but we get a good many eggs, and now and again a duckling or a chickling for the table; the pigs are more solemn, and appear only on birthdays and sich.

Monday, Dec. 7.—On Friday morning about eleven 1500 cacao seeds arrived, and we set to and toiled from twelve that day to six, and went to bed pretty tired. Next day I got about an hour and a half at my History, and was at it again by 8.10, and except an hour for lunch kept at it till four P.M. Yesterday, I did some History in the morning, and slept most of the afternoon; and to-day, being still averse from physical labour, and the mail drawing nigh, drew out of the squad, and finished for press the fifth chapter of my History; fifty-nine pages in one month; which (you will allow me to say) is a devil of a large order; it means at least 177 pages of writing; 89,000 words! and hours going to and fro among my notes. However, this is the way it has to be done; the job must be done fast, or it is of no use. And it is a curious yarn. Honestly, I think people should be amused and convinced, if they could be at the pains to look at such a damned outlandish piece of machinery, which of course they won't. And much I care.

When I was filling baskets all Saturday, in my dull mulish way, perhaps the slowest worker there, surely the

most particular, and the only one that never looked up or knocked off, I could not but think I should have been sent on exhibition as an example to young literary men. Here is how to learn to write, might be the motto. You should have seen us; the verandah was like an Irish bog; our hands and faces were bedaubed with soil; and Faauma was supposed to have struck the right note when she remarked (*à propos* of nothing), "Too much *eleele* (soil) for me!" The cacao (you must understand) has to be planted at first in baskets of plaited cocoa-leaf. From four to ten natives were plaiting these in the wood-shed. Four boys were digging up soil and bringing it by the boxful to the verandah. Lloyd and I and Belle, and sometimes S. (who came to bear a hand), were filling the baskets, removing stones and lumps of clay; Austin and Faauma carried them when full to Fanny, who planted a seed in each, and then set them, packed close, in the corners of the verandah. From twelve on Friday till five P.M. on Saturday we planted the first 1500, and more than 700 of a second lot. You cannot dream how filthy we were, and we were all properly tired. They are all at it again to-day, bar Belle and me, not required, and glad to be out of it. The Chief Justice has not yet replied, and I have news that he received my letter. What a man!

I have gone crazy over Bourget's *Sensations d'Italie;* hence the enclosed dedication,[1] a mere cry of gratitude for the best fun I've had over a new book this ever so!

To Fred Orr

The following is in answer to an application for an autograph from a young gentleman in the United States:—

Vailima, Upolu, Samoa, November 28th, 1891.

DEAR SIR,—Your obliging communication is to hand. I am glad to find that you have read some of my books,

[1] For the volume *Across the Plains.*

and to see that you spell my name right. This is a point (for some reason) of great difficulty; and I believe that a gentleman who can spell Stevenson with a v at sixteen, should have a show for the Presidency before fifty. By that time

I, nearer to the wayside inn,

predict that you will have outgrown your taste for autographs, but perhaps your son may have inherited the collection, and on the morning of the great day will recall my prophecy to your mind. And in the papers of 1921 (say) this letter may arouse a smile.

Whatever you do, read something else besides novels and newspapers; the first are good enough when they are good; the second, at their best, are worth nothing. Read great books of literature and history; try to understand the Roman Empire and the Middle Ages; be sure you do not understand when you dislike them; condemnation is non-comprehension. And if you know something of these two periods, you will know a little more about to-day, and may be a good President.

I send you my best wishes, and am yours,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON,
Author of a vast quantity of little books.

TO E. L. BURLINGAME

The next letter announces to his New York publishers the beginning of his volume on the troubles of Samoa, *A Footnote to History*.

[*Vailima, December* 1891.]

MY DEAR BURLINGAME,—The end of *The Wrecker* having but just come in, you will, I dare say, be appalled to receive three (possibly four) chapters of a new book of the least attractive sort: a history of nowhere in a corner, or no time to mention, running to a volume! Well, it may very likely be an illusion; it is very likely no one could

possibly wish to read it, but I wish to publish it. If you don't cotton to the idea, kindly set it up at my expense, and let me know your terms for publishing. The great affair to me is to have per return (if it might be) four or five—better say half a dozen—sets of the roughest proofs that can be drawn. There are a good many men here whom I want to read the blessed thing, and not one would have the energy to read MS. At the same time, if you care to glance at it, and have the time, I should be very glad of your opinion as to whether I have made any step at all towards possibly inducing folk at home to read matter so extraneous and outlandish. I become heavy and owlish ; years sit upon me ; it begins to seem to me to be a man's business to leave off his damnable faces and say his say. Else I could have made it pungent and light and lively. In considering, kindly forget that I am R. L. S. ; think of the four chapters as a book you are reading, by an inhabitant of our "lovely but fatil" islands ; and see if it could possibly amuse the hebetated public. I have to publish anyway, you understand ; I have a purpose beyond ; I am concerned for some of the parties to this quarrel. What I want to hear is from curiosity ; what I want you to judge of is what we are to do with the book in a business sense. To me it is not business at all ; I had meant originally to lay all the profits to the credit of Samoa ; when it comes to the pinch of writing, I judge this unfair—I give too much—and I mean to keep (if there be any profit at all) one-half for the artisan ; the rest I shall hold over to give to the Samoans *for that which I choose and against work done.* I think I have never heard of greater insolence than to attempt such a subject ; yet the tale is so strange and mixed, and the people so oddly charactered—above all, the whites—and the high note of the hurricane and the warships is so well prepared to take popular interest, and the latter part is so directly in the day's movement, that I am not without hope that some may read it ; and if they don't, a murrain on them ! Here

is, for the first time, a tale of Greeks—Homeric Greeks—mingled with moderns, and all true; Odysseus alongside of Rajah Brooke, *proportion gardée;* and all true. Here is for the first time since the Greeks (that I remember) the history of a handful of men, where all know each other in the eyes, and live close in a few acres, narrated at length, and with the seriousness of history. Talk of the modern novel; here is a modern history. And if I had the misfortune to found a school, the legitimate historian might lie down and die, for he could never overtake his material. Here is a little tale that has not " caret "-ed its " vates " ; " sacer " is another point. R. L. S.

To Henry James

Mr. Henry James was in the habit of sending out for Stevenson's reading books that seemed likely to interest him, and among the last had been M. Paul Bourget's *Sensations d'Italie.*

December 7th, 1891.

MY DEAR HENRY JAMES,—Thanks for yours; your former letter was lost; so it appears was my long and masterly treatise on the *Tragic Muse.* I remember sending it very well, and there went by the same mail a long and masterly tractate to Gosse about his daddy's life, for which I have been long expecting an acknowledgment, and which is plainly gone to the bottom with the other. If you see Gosse, please mention it. These gems of criticism are now lost literature, like the tomes of Alexandria. I could not do 'em again. And I must ask you to be content with a dull head, a weary hand, and short commons, for to-day, as I am physically tired with hard work of every kind, the labours of the planter and the author both piled upon me mountain deep. I am delighted beyond expression by Bourget's book: he has phrases which affect me almost like Montaigne; I had read ere this a masterly essay of his on Pascal; this book does it; I write for all his essays by

this mail, and shall try to meet him when I come to Europe. The proposal is to pass a summer in France, I think in Royat, where the faithful could come and visit me; they are now not many. I expect Henry James to come and break a crust or two with us. I believe it will be only my wife and myself; and she will go over to England, but not I, or possibly incog. to Southampton, and then to Boscombe to see poor Lady Shelley. I am writing—trying to write in a Babel fit for the bottomless pit; my wife, her daughter, her grandson and my mother, all shrieking at each other round the house—not in war, thank God! but the din is ultra martial, and the note of Lloyd joins in occasionally, and the cause of this to-do is simply cacao, whereof chocolate comes. You may drink of our chocolate perhaps in five or six years from now, and not know it. It makes a fine bustle, and gives us some hard work, out of which I have slunk for to-day.

I have a story coming out: God knows when or how; it answers to the name of the *Beach of Falesá*, and I think well of it. I was delighted with the *Tragic Muse;* I thought the Muse herself one of your best works; I was delighted also to hear of the success of your piece, as you know I am a dam failure,[1] and might have dined with the dinner club that Daudet and these parties frequented.

Next day.—I have just been breakfasting at Baiae and Brindisi, and the charm of Bourget hag-rides me. I wonder if this exquisite fellow, all made of fiddle-strings and scent and intelligence, could bear any of my bald prose. If you think he could, ask Colvin to send him a copy of these last essays of mine when they appear; and tell Bourget they go to him from a South Sea Island as literal homage. I have read no new book for years that gave me the same literary thrill as his *Sensations d'Italie.* If (as I imagine) my cut-and-dry literature would be death to him, and worse than death—journalism—be silent on the point. For I have a great curiosity to know him, and

[1] *i.e.* on the stage.

if he doesn't know my work, I shall have the better chance of making his acquaintance. I read *The Pupil* the other day with great joy; your little boy is admirable; why is there no little boy like that unless he hails from the Great Republic?

Here I broke off, and wrote Bourget a dedication; no use resisting; it's a love affair. O, he's exquisite, I bless you for the gift of him. I have really enjoyed this book as I—almost as I—used to enjoy books when I was going twenty–twenty-three; and these are the years for reading!

R. L. S.

To Sidney Colvin

[*Vailima*] *Tuesday, Dec.* 1891.

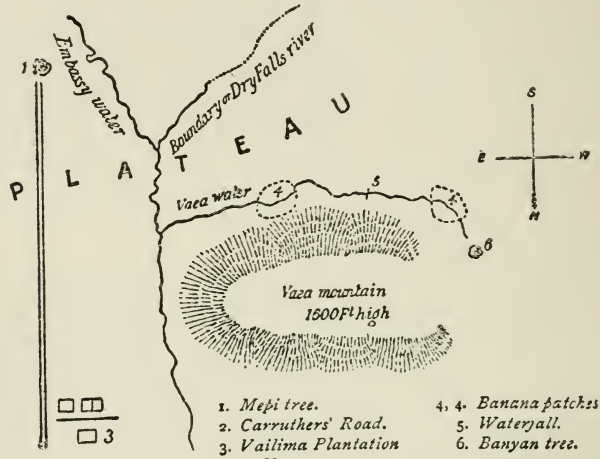
SIR,—I have the honour to report further explorations of the course of the river Vaea, with accompanying sketch plan. The party under my command consisted of one horse, and was extremely insubordinate and mutinous, owing to not being used to go into the bush, and being half-broken anyway—and that the wrong half. The route indicated for my party was up the bed of the so-called river Vaea, which I accordingly followed to a distance of perhaps two or three furlongs eastward from the house of Vailima, where the stream being quite dry, the bush thick, and the ground very difficult, I decided to leave the main body of the force under my command tied to a tree, and push on myself with the point of the advance guard, consisting of one man. The valley had become very narrow and airless; foliage close shut above; dry bed of the stream much excavated, so that I passed under fallen trees without stooping. Suddenly it turned sharply to the north, at right angles to its former direction; I heard living water, and came in view of a tall face of rock and the stream spraying down it; it might have been climbed, but it would have been dangerous, and I had to make my

way up the steep earth banks, where there is nowhere any footing for man, only for trees, which made the rounds of my ladder. I was near the top of this climb, which was very hot and steep, and the pulses were buzzing all over my body, when I made sure there was one external sound in my ears, and paused to listen. No mistake; a sound of a mill-wheel thundering, I thought, close by, yet below me, a huge mill-wheel, yet not going steadily, but with a *schottische* movement, and at each fresh impetus shaking the mountain. There, where I was, I just put down the sound to the mystery of the bush; where no sound now surprises me—and any sound alarms; I only thought it would give Jack a fine fright, down where he stood tied to a tree by himself, and he was badly enough scared when I left him. The good folks at home identified it; it was a sharp earthquake.

At the top of the climb I made my way again to the watercourse; it is here running steady and pretty full; strange these intermittencies—and just a little below the main stream is quite dry, and all the original brook has gone down some lava gallery of the mountain—and just a little further below, it begins picking up from the left hand in little boggy tributaries, and in the inside of a hundred yards has grown a brook again.[1] The general course of the brook was, I guess, S.E.; the valley still very deep and whelmed in wood. It seemed a swindle to have made

[1] As to this peculiar intermittency of the Samoan streams, full in their upper course, but below in many places dry or lost, compare the late Lord Pembroke's *South Sea Bubbles*, p. 212:—"One odd thing connected with these ravines is the fact that the higher you go the more water you find. Unlike the Thames, which begins, I believe, in half a mile of dusty lane, and expands in its brimming breadth as it approaches the sea, a Samoan stream begins in bubbling plenty and ends in utter drought a mile or two from the salt water. Gradually as you ascend you become more and more hopeful; moist patches of sand appear here and there, then tiny pools that a fallen leaf might cover, then larger ones with little thread-like runs of water between them; larger and larger, till at last you reach some hard ledge of trap, over which a glorious stream gurgles and splashes into a pool ample enough for the bath of an elephant."

so sheer a climb and still find yourself at the bottom of a well. But gradually the thing seemed to shallow, the trees to seem poorer and smaller; I could see more and more of the silver sprinkles of sky among the foliage, instead of the sombre piling up of tree behind tree. And here I had two scares—first, away up on my right hand



I heard a bull low; I think it was a bull from the quality of the low, which was singularly songful and beautiful; the bulls belong to me, but how did I know that the bull was aware of that? and my advance guard not being at all properly armed, we advanced with great precaution until I was satisfied that I was passing eastward of the enemy. It was during this period that a pool of the river suddenly boiled up in my face in a little fountain. It was in a very dreary, marshy part among dilapidated trees that you see through holes in the trunks of; and if any kind of beast or elf or devil had come out of that sudden silver ebullition, I declare I do not think I should have been surprised. It was perhaps a thing as curious

—a fish, with which these head waters of the stream are alive. They are some of them as long as my finger, should be easily caught in these shallows, and some day I'll have a dish of them.

Very soon after I came to where the stream collects in another banana swamp, with the bananas bearing well. Beyond, the course is again quite dry ; it mounts with a sharp turn a very steep face of the mountain, and then stops abruptly at the lip of a plateau, I suppose the top of Vaea mountain : plainly no more springs here—there was no smallest furrow of a watercourse beyond—and my task might be said to be accomplished. But such is the animated spirit in the service that the whole advance guard expressed a sentiment of disappointment that an exploration, so far successfully conducted, should come to a stop in the most promising view of fresh successes. And though unprovided either with compass or cutlass, it was determined to push some way along the plateau, marking our direction by the laborious process of bending down, sitting upon, and thus breaking the wild cocoanut trees. This was the less regretted by all from a delightful discovery made of a huge banyan growing here in the bush, with flying-buttressed flying buttresses, and huge arcs of trunk hanging high overhead and trailing down new complications of root. I climbed some way up what seemed the original beginning ; it was easier to climb than a ship's rigging, even rattled ; everywhere there was foot-hold and hand-hold. It was judged wise to return and rally the main body, who had now been left alone for perhaps forty minutes in the bush.

The return was effected in good order, but unhappily I only arrived (like so many other explorers) to find my main body or rear-guard in a condition of mutiny ; the work, it is to be supposed, of terror. It is right I should tell you the Vaea has a bad name, an *aitu fafine*—female devil of the woods—succubus—haunting it, and doubtless Jack had heard of her ; perhaps, during my absence, saw

her; lucky Jack! Anyway, he was neither to hold nor to bind, and finally, after nearly smashing me by accident, and from mere scare and insubordination several times, deliberately set in to kill me; but poor Jack! the tree he selected for that purpose was a banana! I jumped off and gave him the heavy end of my whip over the buttocks! Then I took and talked in his ear in various voices; you should have heard my alto—it was a dreadful, devilish note —I *knew* Jack *knew* it was an *aitu*. Then I mounted him again, and he carried me fairly steadily. He'll learn yet. He has to learn to trust absolutely to his rider; till he does, the risk is always great in thick bush, where a fellow must try different passages, and put back and forward, and pick his way by hair's-breadths.

The expedition returned to Vailima in time to receive the visit of the R. C. Bishop. He is a superior man, much above the average of priests.

Thursday.—Yesterday the same expedition set forth to the southward by what is known as Carruthers' Road. At a fallen tree which completely blocks the way, the main body was as before left behind, and the advance guard of one now proceeded with the exploration. At the great tree known as *Mepi Tree*, after Maben the surveyor, the expedition struck forty yards due west till it struck the top of a steep bank which it descended. The whole bottom of the ravine is filled with sharp lava blocks quite unrolled and very difficult and dangerous to walk among; no water in the course, scarce any sign of water. And yet surely water must have made this bold cutting in the plateau. And if so, why is the lava sharp? My science gave out; but I could not but think it ominous and volcanic. The course of the stream was tortuous, but with a resultant direction a little by west of north; the sides the whole way exceeding steep, the expedition buried under fathoms of foliage. Presently water appeared in the bottom, a good quantity; perhaps thirty or forty cubic feet, with pools and waterfalls. A tree that stands all along the banks

here must be very fond of water; its roots lie close-packed down the stream, like hanks of guts, so as to make often a corrugated walk, each root ending in a blunt tuft of filaments, plainly to drink water. Twice there came in small tributaries from the left or western side—the whole plateau having a smartish inclination to the east; one of the tributaries in a handsome little web of silver hanging in the forest. Twice I was startled by birds; one that barked like a dog; another that whistled loud ploughman's signals, so that I vow I was thrilled, and thought I had fallen among runaway blacks, and regretted my cutlass which I had lost and left behind while taking bearings. A good many fishes in the brook, and many crayfish; one of the last with a queer glow-worm head. Like all our brooks, the water is pure as air, and runs over red stones like rubies. The foliage along both banks very thick and high, the place close, the walking exceedingly laborious. By the time the expedition reached the fork, it was felt exceedingly questionable whether the *moral* of the force were sufficiently good to undertake more extended operations. A halt was called, the men refreshed with water and a bath, and it was decided at a drumhead council of war to continue the descent of the Embassy Water straight for Vailima, whither the expedition returned, in rather poor condition, and wet to the waist, about 4 P.M.

Thus in two days the two main watercourses of this country have been pretty thoroughly explored, and I conceive my instructions fully carried out. The main body of the second expedition was brought back by another officer despatched for that purpose from Vailima. Casualties: one horse wounded; one man bruised; no deaths —as yet, but the bruised man feels to-day as if his case was mighty serious.

Dec. 25, '91.—Your note with a very despicable bulletin of health arrived only yesterday, the mail being a day behind. It contained also the excellent Times article,

which was a sight for sore eyes. I am still *taboo;* the blessed Germans will have none of me; and I only hope they may enjoy the Times article. 'Tis my revenge! I wish you had sent the letter too, as I have no copy, and do not even know what I wrote the last day, with a bad headache, and the mail going out. However, it must have been about right, for the Times article was in the spirit I wished to arouse. I hope we can get rid of the man before it is too late. He has set the natives to war; but the natives, by God's blessing, do not want to fight, and I think it will fizzle out—no thanks to the man who tried to start it. But I did not mean to drift into these politics; rather to tell you what I have done since I last wrote.

Well, I worked away at my *History* for a while, and only got one chapter done; no doubt this spate of work is pretty low now, and will be soon dry; but, God bless you, what a lot I have accomplished; *Wrecker* done, *Beach of Falesá* done, half the *History: c'est étonnant.* (I hear from Burlingame, by the way, that he likes the end of the *Wrecker;* 'tis certainly a violent, dark yarn with interesting, plain turns of human nature), then Lloyd and I went down to live in Haggard's rooms, where Fanny presently joined us. Haggard's rooms are in a strange old building —old for Samoa, and has the effect of the antique like some strange monastery; I would tell you more of it, but I think I'm going to use it in a tale. The annexe close by had its door sealed; poor Dowdney lost at sea in a schooner. The place is haunted. The vast empty sheds, the empty store, the airless, hot, long, low rooms, the claps of wind that set everything flying—a strange uncanny house to spend Christmas in.

Jan. 1*st*, '92.—For a day or two I have sat close and wrought hard at the *History*, and two more chapters are all but done. About thirty pages should go by this mail, which is not what should be, but all I could overtake. Will any one ever read it? I fancy not; people don't

read history for reading, but for education and display—and who desires education in the history of Samoa, with no population, no past, no future, or the exploits of Mataafa, Malietoa, and Consul Knappe? Colkitto and Galasp are a trifle to it. Well, it can't be helped, and it must be done, and, better or worse, it's capital fun. There are two to whom I have not been kind—German Consul Becker and the English Captain Hand, R.N.

On Dec. 30th I rode down with Belle to go to (if you please) the Fancy Ball. When I got to the beach, I found the barometer was below 29°, the wind still in the east and steady, but a huge offensive continent of clouds and vapours forming to leeward. It might be a hurricane; I dared not risk getting caught away from my work, and, leaving Belle, returned at once to Vailima. Next day—yesterday—it was a tearer; we had storm shutters up; I sat in my room and wrote by lamplight—ten pages, if you please, seven of them draft, and some of these compiled from as many as seven different and conflicting authorities, so that was a brave day's work. About two a huge tree fell within sixty paces of our house; a little after, a second went; and we sent out boys with axes and cut down a third, which was too near the house, and buckling like a fishing rod. At dinner we had the front door closed and shuttered, the back door open, the lamp lit. The boys in the cook-house were all out at the cook-house door, where we could see them looking in and smiling. Lauilo and Faauma waited on us with smiles. The excitement was delightful. Some very violent squalls came as we sat there, and every one rejoiced; it was impossible to help it; a soul of putty had to sing. All night it blew; the roof was continually sounding under missiles; in the morning the verandahs were half full of branches torn from the forest. There was a last very wild squall about six; the rain, like a thick white smoke, flying past the house in volleys, and as swift, it seemed, as rifle balls; all with a strange, strident hiss, such as I

have only heard before at sea, and, indeed, thought to be a marine phenomenon. Since then the wind has been falling with a few squalls, mostly rain. But our road is impassable for horses; we hear a schooner has been wrecked and some native houses blown down in Apia, where Belle is still and must remain a prisoner. Lucky I returned while I could! But the great good is this; much bread-fruit and bananas have been destroyed; if this be general through the islands, famine will be imminent; and *whoever blows the coals, there can be no war.* Do I then prefer a famine to a war? you ask. Not always, but just now. I am sure the natives do not want a war; I am sure a war would benefit no one but the white officials, and I believe we can easily meet the famine—or at least that it can be met. That would give our officials a legitimate opportunity to cover their past errors.

Jan. 2nd.—I woke this morning to find the blow quite ended. The heaven was all a mottled grey; even the east quite colourless; the downward slope of the island veiled in wafts of vapour, blue like smoke; not a leaf stirred on the tallest tree; only, three miles away below me on the barrier reef, I could see the individual breakers curl and fall, and hear their conjunct roaring rise, as it still rises at 1 P.M., like the roar of a thoroughfare close by. I did a good morning's work, correcting and clarifying my draft, and have now finished for press eight chapters, ninety-one pages, of this piece of journalism. Four more chapters, say fifty pages, remain to be done; I should gain my wager and finish this volume in three months, that is to say, the end should leave me per February mail; I cannot receive it back till the mail of April. Yes, it can be out in time; pray God that it be in time to help.

How do journalists fetch up their drivel? I aim only at clearness and the most obvious finish, positively at no higher degree of merit, not even at brevity—I am sure it could have been all done, with double the time, in two-thirds of the space. And yet it has taken me two months

to write 45,500 words; and, be damned to my wicked prowess, I am proud of the exploit! The real journalist must be a man not of brass only, but bronze. Chapter IX. gapes for me, but I shrink on the margin, and go on chattering to you. This last part will be much less offensive (strange to say) to the Germans. It is Becker they will never forgive me for; Knappe I pity and do not dislike; Becker I scorn and abominate. Here is the tableau. I. Elements of Discord: Native. II. Elements of Discord: Foreign. III. The Sorrows of Laupepa. IV. Brandeis. V. The Battle of Matautu. VI. Last Exploits of Becker. VII. The Samoan Camps. VIII. Affairs of Lautii and Fangalii. IX. "*Furor Consularis.*" X. The Hurricane. XI. Stuebel Recluse. XII. The Present Government. I estimate the whole roughly at 70,000 words. Should anybody ever dream of reading it, it would be found amusing. $\frac{70000}{300}$ = 233 printed pages; a respectable little five-bob volume, to bloom unread in shop windows. After that, I'll have a spank at fiction. And rest? I shall rest in the grave, or when I come to Italy. If only the public will continue to support me! I lost my chance not dying; there seems blooming little fear of it now. I worked close on five hours this morning; the day before, close on nine; and unless I finish myself off with this letter, I'll have another hour and a half, or *aiblins twa*, before dinner. Poor man, how you must envy me, as you hear of these orgies of work, and you scarce able for a letter. But Lord, Colvin, how lucky the situations are not reversed, for I have no situation, nor am fit for any. Life is a steigh brae. Here, have at Knappe, and no more clavers!

Jan. 3rd.—There was never any man had so many irons in the fire, except Jim Pinkerton.[1] I forgot to mention I have the most gallant suggestion from Lang, with an offer of MS. authorities, which turns my brain.

[1] In *The Wrecker*. As to the story thus suggested by Mr. Andrew Lang, see below, pp. 171, 187, etc.

It's all about the throne of Poland and buried treasure in the Mackay country, and Alan Breck can figure there in glory.

Yesterday, J. and I set off to Blacklock's (American Consul) who lives not far from that little village I have so often mentioned as lying between us and Apia. I had some questions to ask him for my *History;* thence we must proceed to Vailele, where I had also to cross-examine the plantation manager about the battle there. We went by a track I had never before followed down the hill to Vaisigano, which flows here in a deep valley, and was unusually full, so that the horses trembled in the ford. The whole bottom of the valley is full of various streams posting between strips of forest with a brave sound of waters. In one place we had a glimpse of a fall some way higher up, and then sparkling in sunlight in the midst of the green valley. Then up by a winding path scarce accessible to a horse for steepness, to the other side, and the open cocoanut glades of the plantation. Here we rode fast, did a mighty satisfactory afternoon's work at the plantation house, and still faster back. On the return Jack fell with me, but got up again; when I felt him recovering I gave him his head, and he shoved his foot through the rein; I got him by the bit however, and all was well; he had mud over all his face, but his knees were not broken. We were scarce home when the rain began again; that was luck. It is pouring now in torrents; we are in the height of the bad season. Lloyd leaves along with this letter on a change to San Francisco; he had much need of it, but I think this will brace him up. I am, as you see, a tower of strength. I can remember riding not so far and not near so fast when I first came to Samoa, and being shattered next day with fatigue; now I could not tell I have done anything; have re-handled my battle of Fangalii according to yesterday's information —four pages rewritten; and written already some half-dozen pages of letters.

I observe with disgust that while of yore, when I own I was guilty, you never spared me abuse—but now, when I am so virtuous, where is the praise? Do admit that I have become an excellent letter-writer—at least to you, and that your ingratitude is imbecile.—Yours ever,

R. L. S.

XII

LIFE IN SAMOA—*Continued*

SECOND YEAR AT VAILIMA

JANUARY–DECEMBER 1892

THE New Year found Stevenson down with his first attack of the influenza epidemic, then virulent all over the world. But the illness was not sufficient to stop his work, and in the first two months of the year he was busy continuing his conscientious labours on *The Footnote to History*, seeing *The Wrecker* and *The Beach of Falesá* through the press, planning the South Sea plantation novel *Sophia Scarlet*, which never got beyond that inchoate stage, and writing the continuation to *Kidnapped*, first intended to bear the name of the hero, David Balfour, and afterwards changed to *Catriona*. With this he proceeded swimmingly, completing it between February and September, in a shorter time than any other of his sustained narratives; and on publication its success was great. By May he had finished the *Footnote*, and then had a dash at the first chapters of *The Young Chevalier*, which stand in their truncated state a piece of work as vivid and telling as he had ever done. Early in the autumn he struck a still fuller note in the draft of the first chapters of *Weir of Hermiston*.

During this year the household at Vailima received a

new temporary inmate in the person of Mr. Graham Balfour, a cousin whom Stevenson had not previously known, but with whom he soon formed the closest and most confidential friendship of his later life. In the summer and early autumn he was much taken up both with politics and with hospitalities. As hereinafter narrated, he made, and was thwarted in, a serious attempt to effect a reconciliation between the two rival chiefs; and continued his series of letters to the Times showing up the incompetence, and worse, of the responsible Treaty officials. In August he took lively pleasure in a visit paid to the islands by Lady Jersey and some members of her family from Australia. During the course of their stay he conducted the visitors to the rebel camp under aliases, as the needs of the time required, and in a manner that seemed like the realisation of a chapter of a Waverley novel. A month or two later he became aware, with more amusement than alarm, of measures for his deportation set on foot but not carried through by the Treaty officials. For a man of his temper, the political muddle and mismanagement of which the Samoan Islands were the scene —and not only these, however much he might lament them for the sake of the inhabitants, but even the risks he ran of serious personal consequences from his own action, —added to life at least as much of zest and excitement as of annoyance.

In October he determined, not without serious financial misgivings and chiefly in deference to his mother's urgency, to enlarge his house at Vailima by putting up a new block adjoining and communicating with that which he had hitherto inhabited. The work was promptly and efficiently carried out by the German Firm and completed by the end of the year. Quite towards the close of December,

copies of *The Footnote to History* reached Samoa, and the book, so far from being a cause of offence to his friends the managers of that firm, as both he and they had feared, was found acceptable and devoid of offence by them: a result celebrated in the convivial manner described in the last letter of this section. On the whole the year had been a prosperous one, full of successful work and eager interests, although darkened in its later months by disquietude on account of his wife's health. He had himself well maintained the improved strength and the renewed capacity both for literary work and outdoor activity which life in the South Seas had brought him from the first.

To E. L. Burlingame

[*Vailima*] *Jan. 2nd*, '92.

MY DEAR BURLINGAME,—Overjoyed you were pleased with *The Wrecker*, and shall consider your protests. There is perhaps more art than you think for in the peccant chapter, where I have succeeded in packing into one a dedication, an explanation, and a termination. Surely you had not recognised the phrase about boodle? It was a quotation from Jim Pinkerton, and seemed to me agreeably skittish. However, all shall be prayerfully considered.

To come to a more painful subject. Herewith go three more chapters of the wretched History; as you see, I approach the climax. I expect the book to be some 70,000 words, of which you have now 45. Can I finish it for next mail? I am going to try! 'Tis a long piece of journalism, and full of difficulties here and there, of this kind and that, and will make me a power of friends to be sure. There is one Becker who will probably put up a window to me in the church where he was baptized; and I expect a testimonial from Captain Hand.

Sorry to let the mail go without the Scott; this has been a bad month with me, and I have been below myself. I shall find a way to have it come by next, or know the reason why. The mail after, anyway.

A bit of a sketch map appears to me necessary for my History; perhaps two. If I do not have any, 'tis impossible any one should follow; and I, even when not at all interested, demand that I shall be able to follow; even a tourist book without a map is a cross to me; and there must be others of my way of thinking. I inclose the very artless one that I think needful. Vailima, in case you are curious, is about as far again behind Tanugamanono as that is from the sea.

M'Clure is publishing a short story of mine, some 50,000 words, I think, *The Beach of Falesá;* when he's done with it, I want you and Cassell to bring it out in a little volume; I shall send you a dedication for it; I believe it good; indeed, to be honest, very good. Good gear that pleases the merchant.

The other map that I half threaten is a chart for the hurricane. Get me Kimberley's report of the hurricane: not to be found here. It is of most importance; I *must* have it with my proofs of that part, if I cannot have it earlier, which now seems impossible.—Yours in hot haste,

R. L. STEVENSON.

To Miss Adelaide Boodle

At the news that his correspondent was occupied teaching and entertaining a class of children in a Kilburn basement, Stevenson bethinks himself of helping her by writing an account of Samoa and Samoan life for children.

Vailima, January 4th, 1892.

MY DEAR ADELAIDE,—We were much pleased with your letter and the news of your employment. Admirable, your method. But will you not run dry of fairy stories? Please salute your pupils, and tell them that a

long, lean, elderly man who lives right through on the under side of the world, so that down in your cellar you are nearer him than the people in the street, desires his compliments. This man lives in an island which is not very long, and extremely narrow. The sea beats round it very hard, so that it is difficult to get to shore. There is only one harbour where ships come, even that is very wild and dangerous; four ships of war were broken there a little while ago, and one of them is still lying on its side on a rock clean above water, where the sea threw it as you might throw your fiddle bow on the table. All round the harbour the town is strung out, it is nothing but wooden houses, only there are some churches built of stone, not very large, but the people have never seen such fine buildings. Almost all the houses are of one story. Away at one end lives the king of the whole country. His palace has a thatched roof which stands upon posts; it has no walls, but when it blows and rains, they have Venetian blinds which they let down between the posts and make it very snug. There is no furniture, and the king and queen and the courtiers sit and eat on the floor, which is of gravel: the lamp stands there too, and every now and then it is upset. These good folks wear nothing but a kilt about their waists, unless to go to church or for a dance, or the New Year, or some great occasion. The children play marbles all along the street; and though they are generally very jolly, yet they get awfully cross over their marbles, and cry and fight like boys and girls at home. Another amusement in country places is to shoot fish with a bow and arrow. All round the beach there is bright shallow water where fishes can be seen darting or lying in shoals. The child trots round the shore, and wherever he sees a fish, lets fly an arrow and misses, and then wades in after his arrow. It is great fun (I have tried it) for the child, and I never heard of it doing any harm to the fishes: so what could be more jolly? The road up to this lean man's house is uphill

all the way and through forests; the forests are of great trees, not so much unlike the trees at home, only here and there are some very queer ones mixed with them, cocoa-nut palms, and great forest trees that are covered with blossom like red hawthorn, but not near so bright; and from all the trees thick creepers hang down like ropes, and nasty-looking weeds that they call orchids grow in the forks of the branches; and on the ground many prickly things are dotted which they call pine-apples: I suppose every one has eaten pine-apple drops.

On the way up to the lean man's house you pass a little village, all of houses like the king's house, so that as you ride through you can see everybody sitting at dinner, or if it be night, lying in their beds by lamplight; for all these people are terribly afraid of ghosts, and would not lie in the dark for any favour. After the village, there is only one more house, and that is the lean man's. For the people are not very many, and live all by the sea, and the whole inside of the island is desert woods and mountains. When the lean man goes into this forest, he is very much ashamed to say it, but he is always in a terrible fright. The wood is so great and empty and hot, and it is always filled with curious noises; birds cry like children and bark like dogs, and he can hear people laughing and felling trees; and the other day (when he was far in the woods) he heard a great sound like the biggest mill-wheel possible going with a kind of dot-and-carry-one movement like a dance. That was the noise of an earthquake away down below him in the bowels of the earth, and that is the same thing as to say away up towards you in your cellar in Kilburn. All these noises make him feel lonely and scared, and he doesn't quite know what he is scared of. Once when he was just about to cross a river, a blow struck him on the top of his head and knocked him head-foremost down the bank and splash into the water. It was a nut, I fancy, that had fallen from a tree, by which

accidents people are sometimes killed. But at the time he thought it was a black boy.

Aha, say you, and what is a black boy? Well, there are here a lot of poor people who are brought here from distant islands to labour as slaves for the Germans. They are not at all like the king or his people, who are brown and very pretty; but these are black as negroes and as ugly as sin, poor souls, and in their own lands they live all the time at war and cook and eat men's flesh. The Germans thrash them with whips to make them work, and every now and then some run away into the Bush, as the forest is called, and build little sheds of leaves, and eat nuts and roots and fruit, and dwell there by themselves in the great desert. Sometimes they are bad and wild and come down in the villages and steal and kill; and people whisper to each other that some of them have gone back to their horrid old habits, and catch men and women in order to eat them. But it is very likely not true; and the most of them are only poor, stupid, trembling, half-starved, pitiful creatures like frightened dogs. Their life is all very well when the sun shines, as it does eight or nine months in the year. But it is very different the rest of the time. The wind rages here most violently. The great trees thrash about like whips; the air is filled with leaves and great branches flying about like birds; and the sound of the trees falling shakes the earth. It rains too as it never rains at home. You can hear a shower while it is yet half a mile away, hissing like a shower-bath in the forest; and when it comes to you, the water blinds your eyes, and the cold drenching takes your breath away as though some one had struck you. In that kind of weather it must be dreadful indeed to live in the woods, one man alone by himself. And you must know that, if the lean man feels afraid to be in the forest, the people of the island and the black boys are much more afraid than he. For they believe the woods to be quite filled with spirits; some are like pigs, and some are like flying things;

but others (and these are thought the most dangerous) come in the shape of beautiful young women and young men, beautifully dressed in the island manner, with fine kilts and fine necklaces and crowns of scarlet seeds and flowers. Woe betide he or she who gets to speak with one of these! They will be charmed out of their wits, and come home again quite silly, and go mad and die. So that the poor black boy must be always trembling and looking about for the coming of the women-devils.

Sometimes the women-devils go down out of the woods into the villages, and here is a tale the lean man heard last year. One of the islanders was sitting in his house, and he had cooked fish. There came along the road two beautiful young women, dressed as I told you, who came into his house and asked for some of his fish. It is the fashion in the islands always to give what is asked, and never to ask folk's names. So the man gave them fish and talked to them in the island jesting way. And presently he asked one of the women for her red necklace, which is good manners and their way; he had given the fish, and he had a right to ask for something back. "I will give it you by and by," said the woman, and she and her companion went away; but he thought they were gone very suddenly, and the truth is they had vanished. The night was nearly come, when the man heard the voice of the woman crying that he should come to her and she would give the necklace. And he looked out, and behold she was standing calling him from the top of the sea, on which she stood as you might on the table. At that, fear came on the man; he fell on his knees and prayed, and the woman disappeared. It was known afterwards that this was once a woman indeed, but should have died a thousand years ago, and has lived all that while as a devil in the woods beside the spring of a river. Saumai-afe (Sow-my-affy) is her name, in case you want to write to her.—Ever your friend Tusitala (tale-writer),

alias ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

To Sidney Colvin

The South Sea novel here mentioned, *Sophia Scarlet*, never got beyond the rough draft of an opening chapter or two.

[*Vailima*] *Jan.* 31*st*, '92.

MY DEAR COLVIN,—No letter at all from you, and this scratch from me! Here is a year that opens ill. Lloyd is off to "the coast" sick—*the coast* means California over most of the Pacific—I have been down all month with influenza, and am just recovering—I am overlaid with proofs, which I am just about half fit to attend to. One of my horses died this morning, and another is now dying on the front lawn—Lloyd's horse and Fanny's. Such is my quarrel with destiny. But I am mending famously, come and go on the balcony, have perfectly good nights, and though I still cough, have no oppression and no hemorrhage and no fever. So if I can find time and courage to add no more, you will know my news is not altogether of the worst; a year or two ago, and what a state I should have been in now! Your silence, I own, rather alarms me. But I tell myself you have just miscarried; had you been too ill to write, some one would have written me. Understand, I send this brief scratch not because I am unfit to write more, but because I have 58 galleys of *The Wrecker* and 102 of *The Beach of Falesá* to get overhauled somehow or other in time for the mail, and for three weeks I have not touched a pen with my finger.

Feb. 1*st.*—The second horse is still alive, but I still think dying. The first was buried this morning. My proofs are done; it was a rough two days of it, but done. *Consummatum est; ua uma.* I believe *The Wrecker* ends well; if I know what a good yarn is, the last four chapters make a good yarn—but pretty horrible. *The Beach of Falesá* I still think well of, but it seems it's immoral and there's a to-do, and financially it may prove a heavy disappointment. The plaintive request sent to me, to make

the young folks married properly before " that night," I refused ; you will see what would be left of the yarn, had I consented.[1] This is a poison bad world for the romancer, this Anglo-Saxon world ; I usually get out of it by not having any women in it at all ; but when I remember I had *The Treasure of Franchard* refused as unfit for a family magazine, I feel despair weigh upon my wrists.

As I know you are always interested in novels, I must tell you that a new one is now entirely planned. It is to be called *Sophia Scarlet*, and is in two parts. Part I. The Vanilla Planter. Part II. The Overseers. No chapters, I think ; just two dense blocks of narrative, the first of which is purely sentimental, but the second has some rows and quarrels, and winds up with an explosion, if you please ! I am just burning to get at *Sophia*, but I *must* do this Samoan journalism—that's a cursed duty. The first part of *Sophia*, bar the first twenty or thirty pages, writes itself ; the second is more difficult, involving a good many characters—about ten, I think—who have to be kept all moving, and give the effect of a society. I have three women to handle, out and well-away ! but only Sophia is in full tone. Sophia and two men, Windermere, the Vanilla Planter, who dies at the end of Part I., and Rainsforth, who only appears in the beginning of Part II. The fact is, I blush to own it, but Sophia is a *regular novel ;* heroine and hero, and false accusation, and love, and marriage, and all the rest of it—all planted in a big South Sea plantation run by ex-English officers—*à la* Stewart's plantation in Tahiti.[2] There is a strong undercurrent of labour trade which gives it a kind of Uncle Tom flavour, *absit omen !*

[1] Editors and publishers (since those days we have been *déniaisés* with a vengeance) had actually been inclined to shy at the terms of the fraudulent marriage contract, which is the pivot of the whole story ; see below, p. 187.

[2] For a lively account of this plantation and its history, see Lord Pembroke's *South Sea Bubbles*, chap. i.

The first start is hard; it is hard to avoid a little tedium here, but I think by beginning with the arrival of the three Miss Scarlets hot from school and society in England, I may manage to slide in the information. The problem is exactly a Balzac one, and I wish I had his fist —for I have already a better method—the kinetic, whereas he continually allowed himself to be led into the static. But then he had the fist, and the most I can hope is to get out of it with a modicum of grace and energy, but for sure without the strong impression, the full, dark brush. Three people have had it, the real creator's brush: Scott, see much of *The Antiquary* and *The Heart of Midlothian* (especially all round the trial, before, during, and after)—Balzac—and Thackeray in *Vanity Fair*. Everybody else either paints *thin*, or has to stop to paint, or paints excitedly, so that you see the author skipping before his canvas. Here is a long way from poor Sophia Scarlet!

This day is published

Sophia Scarlet

By

Robert Louis Stevenson

To J. M. Barrie

The following is the first of several letters to Mr. J. M. Barrie, for whose work Stevenson had a warm admiration, and with whom he soon established by correspondence a cordial friendship.

Vailima, Samoa, February 1892.

DEAR MR. BARRIE,—This is at least the third letter I have written you, but my correspondence has a bad habit of not getting so far as the post. That which I possess of manhood turns pale before the business of the address and envelope. But I hope to be more fortunate with this: for, besides the usual and often recurrent desire to thank

you for your work—you are one of four that have come to the front since I was watching and had a corner of my own to watch, and there is no reason, unless it be in these mysterious tides that ebb and flow, and make and mar and murder the works of poor scribblers, why you should not do work of the best order. The tides have borne away my sentence, of which I was weary at any rate, and between authors I may allow myself so much freedom as to leave it pending. We are both Scots besides, and I suspect both rather Scotty Scots; my own Scotchness tends to intermittency, but is at times erisypelitous—if that be rightly spelt. Lastly, I have gathered we had both made our stages in the metropolis of the winds: our Virgil's "grey metropolis," and I count that a lasting bond. No place so brands a man.

Finally, I feel it a sort of duty to you to report progress. This may be an error, but I believed I detected your hand in an article—it may be an illusion, it may have been by one of those industrious insects who catch up and reproduce the handling of each emergent man—but I'll still hope it was yours—and hope it may please you to hear that the continuation of *Kidnapped* is under way. I have not yet got to Alan, so I do not know if he is still alive, but David seems to have a kick or two in his shanks. I was pleased to see how the Anglo-Saxon theory fell into the trap: I gave my Lowlander a Gaelic name, and even commented on the fact in the text; yet almost all critics recognised in David and Alan a Saxon and a Celt. I know not about England; in Scotland at least, where Gaelic was spoken in Fife little over the century ago, and in Galloway not much earlier, I deny that there exists such a thing as a pure Saxon, and I think it more than questionable if there be such a thing as a pure Celt.

But what have you to do with this? and what have I? Let us continue to inscribe our little bits of tales, and let the heathen rage!—Yours, with sincere interest in your career,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

To Sidney Colvin

[*Vailima*] *Feb.* 1892.

my dear colvin,—This has been a busyish month for a sick man. First, Faauma—the bronze candlestick, whom otherwise I called my butler—bolted from the bed and bosom of Lafaele, the Archangel Hercules, prefect of the cattle. There was a deuce to pay, and Hercules was inconsolable, and immediately started out after a new wife, and has had one up on a visit, but says she has " no conversation " ; and I think he will take back the erring and possibly repentant candlestick ; whom we all devoutly prefer, as she is not only highly decorative, but good-natured, and if she does little work makes no rows. I tell this lightly, but it really was a heavy business ; many were accused of complicity, and Rafael was really very sorry. I had to hold beds of justice—literally—seated in my bed and surrounded by lying Samoans seated on the floor ; and there were many picturesque and still inexplicable passages. It is hard to reach the truth in these islands.

The next incident overlapped with this. S. and Fanny found three strange horses in the paddock : for long now the boys have been forbidden to leave their horses here one hour because our grass is over-grazed. S. came up with the news, and I saw I must now strike a blow. " To the pound with the lot," said I. He proposed taking the three himself, but I thought that too dangerous an experiment, said I should go too, and hurried into my boots so as to show decision taken, in the necessary interviews. They came of course—the interviews—and I explained what I was going to do at huge length, and stuck to my guns. I am glad to say the natives, with their usual (purely speculative) sense of justice, highly approved the step after reflection. Meanwhile off went S. and I with the three *corpora delicti ;* and a good job I went ! Once,

when our circus began to kick, we thought all was up; but we got them down all sound in wind and limb. I judged I was much fallen off from my Elliot forefathers, who managed this class of business with neatness and despatch.

As we got down to town, we met the mother and daughter of my friend ——, bathed in tears; they had left the house over a row, which I have not time or spirits to describe. This matter dashed me a good deal, and the first decent-looking day I mounted and set off to see if I could not patch things up. Half-way down it came on to rain tropic style, and I came back from my second outing drenched like a drowned man—I was literally blinded as I came back among these sheets of water; and the consequence was I was laid down with diarrhœa and threatenings of Samoa colic for the inside of another week. Meanwhile up came Laulii,[1] in whose house Mrs. and Miss —— have taken refuge. One of Mrs. ——'s grievances is that her son has married one of these "pork-eaters and cannibals." (As a matter of fact there is no memory of cannibalism in Samoa.) And a strange thing it was to hear the "cannibal" Laulii describe her sorrows. She is singularly pretty and sweet, her training reflects wonderful credit on her husband; and when she began to describe to us—to act to us, in the tone of an actress walking through a rehearsal—the whole bearing of her angry guests; indicating the really tragic notes when they came in, so that Fanny and I were ashamed to laugh, and touching off the merely ludicrous with infinite tact and sly humour; showing, in fact, in her whole picture of a couple of irate barbarian women, the whole play and sympathy of what we call the civilised mind; the contrast was seizing. I speak with feeling. To-day again, being the first day humanly possible for me, I went down to Apia with Fanny, and between two and three hours did I argue with that old woman—not immovable, would she had

[1] The native wife of a carpenter in Apia.

been! but with a mechanical mind like a piece of a musical snuff-box, that returned always to the same starting-point; not altogether base, for she was long-suffering with me and professed even gratitude, and was just (in a sense) to her son, and showed here and there moments of genuine and not undignified emotion; but O! on the other side, what lapses—what a mechanical movement of the brain, what occasional trap-door devils of meanness, what a wooden front of pride! I came out damped and saddened and (to say truth) a trifle sick. My wife had better luck with the daughter; but O, it was a weary business!

To add to my grief—but that's politics. Before I sleep to-night I have a confession to make. When I was sick I tried to get to work to finish that Samoa thing; wouldn't go; and at last, in the colic time, I slid off into *David Balfour*,[1] some 50 pages of which are drafted, and like me well. Really I think it is spirited; and there's a heroine that (up to now) seems to have attractions: *absit omen!* David, on the whole, seems excellent. Alan does not come in till the tenth chapter, and I am only at the eighth, so I don't know if I can find him again; but David is on his feet, and doing well, and very much in love, and mixed up with the Lord Advocate and the (untitled) Lord Lovat, and all manner of great folk. And the tale interferes with my eating and sleeping. The join is bad; I have not thought to strain too much for continuity; so this part be alive, I shall be content. But there's no doubt David seems to have changed his style, de'il ha'e him! And much I care, if the tale travel!

Friday, Feb.?? 19th?—Two incidents to-day which I must narrate. After lunch, it was raining pitilessly; we were sitting in my mother's bedroom, and I was reading aloud Kinglake's Charge of the Light Brigade, and we had just been all seized by the horses aligning with Lord George Paget, when a figure appeared on the verandah;

[1] The sequel to *Kidnapped*, published in the following year under the title *Catriona*.

a little, slim, small figure of a lad, with blond (*i.e.* limed) hair, a propitiatory smile, and a nose that alone of all his features grew pale with anxiety. "I come here stop," was about the outside of his English; and I began at once to guess that he was a runaway labourer,[1] and that the bush-knife in his hand was stolen. It proved he had a mate, who had lacked his courage, and was hidden down the road; they had both made up their minds to run away, and had "come here stop." I could not turn out the poor rogues, one of whom showed me marks on his back, into the drenching forest; I could not reason with them, for they had not enough English, and not one of our boys spoke their tongue; so I bade them feed and sleep here to-night, and to-morrow I must do what the Lord shall bid me.

Near dinner time, I was told that a friend of Lafaele's had found human remains in my bush. After dinner, a figure was seen skulking across towards the waterfall, which produced from the verandah a shout, in my most stentorian tones: "*O ai le ingoa?*" literally "Who the name?" which serves here for "What's your business?" as well. It proved to be Lafaele's friend; I bade a kitchen boy, Lauilo, go with him to see the spot, for though it had ceased raining, the whole island ran and dripped. Lauilo was willing enough, but the friend of the archangel demurred; he had too much business; he had no time. "All right," I said, "you too much frightened, I go along," which of course produced the usual shout of delight from all those who did not require to go. I got into my Saranac snow boots; Lauilo got a cutlass; Mary Carter, our Sydney maid, joined the party for a lark, and off we set. I tell you our guide kept us moving; for the dusk fell swift. Our woods have an infamous reputation at the best, and our errand (to say the least of it) was grisly. At last they found the remains; they were old,

[1] Most of the work on the plantations in Samoa is done by "black boys," *i.e.* imported labourers from other (Melanesian) islands.

which was all I cared to be sure of; it seemed a strangely small "pickle-banes" to stand for a big, flourishing, buck-islander, and their situation in the darkening and dripping bush was melancholy. All at once, I found there was a second skull, with a bullet-hole I could have stuck my two thumbs in—say anybody else's one thumb. My Samoans said it could not be, there were not enough bones; I put the two pieces of skull together, and at last convinced them. Whereupon, in a flash, they found the not unromantic explanation. This poor brave had succeeded in the height of a Samoan warrior's ambition; he had taken a head, which he was never destined to show to his applauding camp. Wounded himself, he had crept here into the bush to die with his useless trophy by his side. His date would be about fifteen years ago, in the great battle between Laupepa and Talavou, which took place on My Land, Sir. To-morrow we shall bury the bones and fire a salute in honour of unfortunate courage.

Do you think I have an empty life? or that a man jogging to his club has so much to interest and amuse him?—touch and try him too, but that goes along with the others: no pain, no pleasure, is the iron law. So here I stop again, and leave, as I left yesterday, my political business untouched. And lo! here comes my pupil, I believe, so I stop in time.

March 2nd.—Since I last wrote, fifteen chapters of *David Balfour* have been drafted, and five *tirés au clair*. I think it pretty good; there's a blooming maiden that costs anxiety—she is as virginal as billy; but David seems there and alive, and the Lord Advocate is good, and so I think is an episodic appearance of the Master of Lovat. In Chapter XVII. I shall get David abroad—Alan went already in Chapter XII. The book should be about the length of *Kidnapped;* this early part of it, about D.'s evidence in the Appin case, is more of a story than anything in *Kidnapped*, but there is no doubt there comes a break in the middle, and the tale is practically in two

divisions. In the first James More and the M'Gregors, and Catriona, only show; in the second, the Appin case being disposed of, and James Stewart hung, they rule the roast and usurp the interest—should there be any left. Why did I take up *David Balfour?* I don't know. A sudden passion.

Monday, I went down in the rain with a colic to take the chair at a public meeting; dined with Haggard; sailed off to my meeting, and fought with wild beasts for three anxious hours. All was lost that any sensible man cared for, but the meeting did not break up—thanks a good deal to R. L. S.—and the man who opposed my election, and with whom I was all the time wrangling, proposed the vote of thanks to me with a certain handsomeness; I assure you I had earned it. . . . Haggard and the great Abdul, his high-caste Indian servant, imported by my wife, were sitting up for me with supper, and I suppose it was twelve before I got to bed. Tuesday raining, my mother rode down, and we went to the Consulate to sign a Factory and Commission. Thence, I to the lawyers, to the printing office, and to the mission. It was dinner time when I returned home.

This morning, our cook-boy having suddenly left—injured feelings—the archangel was to cook breakfast. I found him lighting the fire before dawn; his eyes blazed, he had no word of any language left to use, and I saw in him (to my wonder) the strongest workings of gratified ambition. Napoleon was no more pleased to sign his first treaty with Austria than was Lafaele to cook that breakfast. All morning, when I had hoped to be at this letter, I slept like one drugged, and you must take this (which is all I can give you) for what it is worth—

D. B.

Memoirs of his Adventures at Home and Abroad. The Second Part; wherein are set forth the misfortunes in which he was involved upon the Appin Murder; his

troubles with Lord Advocate Prestongrange; captivity on the Bass Rock; journey into France and Holland; and singular relations with James More Drummond or Macgregor, a son of the notorious Rob Roy.

Chapters.—I. A Beggar on Horseback. II. The Highland Writer. III. I go to Pilrig. IV. Lord Advocate Prestongrange. V. Butter and Thunder. VI. I make a fault in honour. VII. The Bravo. VIII. The Heather on Fire. IX. I begin to be haunted with a red-headed man. X. The Wood by Silvermills. XI. On the march again with Alan. XII. Gillane Sands. XIII. The Bass Rock. XIV. Black Andie's Tale of Tod Lapraik. XV. I go to Inveraray.

That is it, as far as drafted. Chapters IV. V. VII. IX. and XIV. I am specially pleased with; the last being an episodical bogie story about the Bass Rock told there by the Keeper.

To William Morris

The following draft letter addressed to Mr. William Morris was found among Stevenson's papers after his death. It has touches of affectation and constraint not usual with him, and it is no doubt on that account that he did not send it; but though not in his best manner, it seems worth printing as illustrating the variety of his interests and admirations in literature.

Vailima, Samoa, Feb. 1892.

MASTER,—A plea from a place so distant should have some weight, and from a heart so grateful should have some address. I have been long in your debt, Master, and I did not think it could be so much increased as you have now increased it. I was long in your debt and deep in your debt for many poems that I shall never forget, and for *Sigurd* before all, and now you have plunged me beyond payment by the Saga Library. And so now, true to human nature, being plunged beyond payment, I come and bark at your heels.

For surely, Master, that tongue that we write, and that you have illustrated so nobly, is yet alive. She has her rights and laws, and is our mother, our queen, and our instrument. Now in that living tongue *where* has one sense, *whereas* another. In the *Heathslayings Story*, p. 241, line 13, it bears one of its ordinary senses. Elsewhere and usually through the two volumes, which is all that has yet reached me of this entrancing publication, *whereas* is made to figure for *where*.

For the love of God, my dear and honoured Morris, use *where*, and let us know *whereas* we are, wherefore our gratitude shall grow, whereby you shall be the more honoured wherever men love clear language, whereas now, although we honour, we are troubled.

Whereunder, please find inscribed to this very impudent but yet very anxious document, the name of one of the most distant but not the youngest or the coldest of those who honour you ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

TO MRS. CHARLES FAIRCHILD

The projected visit of Mr. Kipling, with his wife and brother-in-law, to Samoa, which is mentioned towards the close of this letter, never took place, much to the regret of both authors.

[*Vailima, March* 1892.]

MY DEAR MRS. FAIRCHILD,—I am guilty in your sight, but my affairs besiege me. The chief-justiceship of a family of nineteen persons is in itself no sinecure, and sometimes occupies me for days: two weeks ago for four days almost entirely, and for two days entirely. Besides which, I have in the last few months written all but one chapter of a *History of Samoa* for the last eight or nine years; and while I was unavoidably delayed in the writing of this, awaiting material, put in one-half of *David Balfour*, the sequel to *Kidnapped*. Add the ordinary impediments of life, and admire my busyness. I am now an old, but

healthy skeleton, and degenerate much towards the machine. By six at work : stopped at half-past ten to give a history lesson to a step-grandson ; eleven, lunch ; after lunch we have a musical performance till two ; then to work again ; bath, 4.40 ; dinner, five ; cards in the evening till eight ; and then to bed—only I have no bed, only a chest with a mat and blankets—and read myself to sleep. This is the routine, but often sadly interrupted. Then you may see me sitting on the floor of my verandah haranguing and being harangued by squatting chiefs on a question of a road ; or more privately holding an inquiry into some dispute among our familiars, myself on my bed, the boys on the floor—for when it comes to the judicial I play dignity—or else going down to Apia on some more or less unsatisfactory errand. Altogether it is a life that suits me, but it absorbs me like an ocean. That is what I have always envied and admired in Scott ; with all that immensity of work and study, his mind kept flexible, glancing to all points of natural interest. But the lean hot spirits, such as mine, become hypnotised with their bit occupations—if I may use Scotch to you—it is so far more scornful than any English idiom. Well, I can't help being a skeleton, and you are to take this devious passage for an apology.

I thought *Aladdin*[1] capital fun ; but why, in fortune, did he pretend it was moral at the end ? The so-called nineteenth century, *où va-t-il se nicher ?* 'Tis a trifle, but Pyle would do well to knock the passage out, and leave his boguey tale a boguey tale, and a good one at that.

The arrival of your box was altogether a great success to the castaways. You have no idea where we live. Do you know, in all these islands there are not five hundred whites, and no postal delivery, and only one village—it is no more—and would be a mean enough village in Europe ? We were asked the other day if Vailima were the name of our post town, and we laughed. Do you know, though

[1] By Howard Pyle.

we are but three miles from the village metropolis, we have no road to it, and our goods are brought on the pack-saddle? And do you know—or I should rather say, can you believe—or (in the famous old Tichborne trial phrase) would you be surprised to learn, that all you have read of Vailima—or Subpriorsford, as I call it—is entirely false, and we have no ice-machine, and no electric light, and no water supply but the cistern of the heavens, and but one public room, and scarce a bedroom apiece? But, of course, it is well known that I have made enormous sums by my evanescent literature, and you will smile at my false humility. The point, however, is much on our minds just now. We are expecting an invasion of Kiplings; very glad we shall be to see them; but two of the party are ladies, and I tell you we had to hold a council of war to stow them. You European ladies are so particular; with all of mine, sleeping has long become a public function, as with natives and those who go down much into the sea in ships.

Dear Mrs. Fairchild, I must go to my work. I have but two words to say in conclusion.

First, civilisation is rot.

Second, console a savage with more of the milk of that over-civilised being, your adorable schoolboy.

As I wrote these remarkable words, I was called down to eight o'clock prayers, and have just worked through a chapter of Joshua and five verses, with five treble choruses, of a Samoan hymn; but the music was good, our boys and precentress ('tis always a woman that leads) did better than I ever heard them, and to my great pleasure I understood it all except one verse. This gave me the more time to try and identify what the parts were doing, and further convict my dull ear. Beyond the fact that the soprano rose to the tonic above, on one occasion I could recognise nothing. This is sickening, but I mean to teach my ear better before I am done with it or this vile carcase.

I think it will amuse you (for a last word) to hear that our precentress—she is the washerwoman—is our shame. She is a good, healthy, comely, strapping young wench, full of energy and seriousness, a splendid workwoman, delighting to train our chorus, delighting in the poetry of the hymns, which she reads aloud (on the least provocation) with a great sentiment of rhythm. Well, then, what is curious? Ah, we did not know! but it was told us in a whisper from the cook-house—she is not of good family. Don't let it get out, please; everybody knows it, of course, here; there is no reason why Europe and the States should have the advantage of me also. And the rest of my housefolk are all chief-people, I assure you. And my late overseer (far the best of his race) is a really serious chief with a good "name." Tina is the name; it is not in the Almanach de Gotha, it must have got dropped at press. The odd thing is, we rather share the prejudice. I have almost always—though not quite always—found the higher the chief the better the man through all the islands; or, at least, that the best man came always from a highish rank. I hope Helen will continue to prove a bright exception.

With love to Fairchild and the Huge Schoolboy, I am, my dear Mrs. Fairchild, yours very sincerely,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

To Sidney Colvin

[*Vailima*] *March 9th* [1892].

MY DEAR S. C.,—Take it not amiss if this is a wretched letter. I am eaten up with business. Every day this week I have had some business impediment—I am even now waiting a deputation of chiefs about the road—and my precious morning was shattered by a polite old scourge of a *faipule*—parliament man—come begging. All the time *David Balfour* is skelping along. I began it the 13th

of last month; I have now 12 chapters, 79 pages ready for press, or within an ace, and, by the time the month is out, one-half should be completed, and I'll be back at drafting the second half. What makes me sick is to think of Scott turning out *Guy Mannering* in three weeks! What a pull of work: heavens, what thews and sinews! And here am I, my head spinning from having only re-written seven not very difficult pages—and not very good when done. Weakling generation. It makes me sick of myself, to make such a fash and bobbery over a rotten end of an old nursery yarn, not worth spitting on when done. Still, there is no doubt I turn out my work more easily than of yore; and I suppose I should be singly glad of that. And if I got my book done in six weeks, seeing it will be about half as long as a Scott, and I have to write everything twice, it would be about the same rate of industry. It is my fair intention to be done with it in three months, which would make me about one-half the man Sir Walter was for application and driving the dull pen. Of the merit we shall not talk; but I don't think Davie is *without* merit.

March 12th.—And I have this day triumphantly finished 15 chapters, 100 pages—being exactly one-half (as near as anybody can guess) of *David Balfour;* the book to be about a fifth as long again (altogether) as *Treasure Island:* could I but do the second half in another month! But I can't, I fear; I shall have some belated material arriving by next mail, and must go again at the History. Is it not characteristic of my broken tenacity of mind, that I should have left Davie Balfour some five years in the British Linen Company's Office, and then follow him at last with such vivacity? But I leave you again; the last (15th) chapter ought to be re-wrote, or part of it, and I want the half completed in the month, and the month is out by midnight; though, to be sure, last month was February, and I might take grace. These notes are only to show I hold you in mind, though I know they can have no interest for man or God or animal.

I should have told you about the Club. We have been asked to try and start a sort of weekly ball for the half-castes and natives, ourselves to be the only whites; and we consented, from a very heavy sense of duty, and with not much hope. Two nights ago we had twenty people up, received them in the front verandah, entertained them on cake and lemonade, and I made a speech—embodying our proposals, or conditions, if you like—for I suppose thirty minutes. No joke to speak to such an audience, but it is believed I was thoroughly intelligible. I took the plan of saying everything at least twice in a different form of words, so that if the one escaped my hearers, the other might be seized. One white man came with his wife, and was kept rigorously on the front verandah below! You see what a sea of troubles this is like to prove; but it is the only chance—and when it blows up, it must blow up! I have no more hope in anything than a dead frog; I go into everything with a composed despair, and don't mind—just as I always go to sea with the conviction I am to be drowned, and like it before all other pleasures. But you should have seen the return voyage, when nineteen horses had to be found in the dark, and nineteen bridles, all in a drench of rain, and the club, just constituted as such, sailed away in the wet, under a cloudy moon like a bad shilling, and to descend a road through the forest that was at that moment the image of a respectable mountain brook. My wife, who is president *with power to expel*, had to begin her functions. . . .

25*th March*.—Heaven knows what day it is, but I am ashamed, all the more as your letter from Bournemouth of all places—poor old Bournemouth!—is to hand, and contains a statement of pleasure in my letters which I wish I could have rewarded with a long one. What has gone on? A vast of affairs, of a mingled, strenuous, inconclusive, desultory character; much waste of time, much riding to and fro, and little transacted or at least peracted.

Let me give you a review of the present state of our

live stock.—Six boys in the bush; six souls about the house. Talolo, the cook, returns again to-day, after an absence which has cost me about twelve hours of riding, and I suppose eight hours' solemn sitting in council. "I am sorry indeed for the Chief Justice of Samoa," I said; "it is more than I am fit for to be Chief Justice of Vailima." —Lauilo is steward. Both these are excellent servants; we gave a luncheon party when we buried the Samoan bones, and I assure you all was in good style, yet we never interfered. The food was good, the wine and dishes went round as by mechanism.—Steward's assistant and washman, Arrick, a New Hebridee black boy, hired from the German firm; not so ugly as most, but not pretty neither; not so dull as his sort are, but not quite a Crichton. When he came first, he ate so much of our good food that he got a prominent belly. Kitchen assistant, Tomas (Thomas in English), a Fiji man, very tall and handsome, moving like a marionette with sudden bounds, and rolling his eyes with sudden effort.—Washerwoman and precentor, Helen, Tomas's wife. This is our weak point; we are ashamed of Helen; the cook-house blushes for her; they murmur there at her presence. She seems all right; she is not a bad-looking, strapping wench, seems chaste, is industrious, has an excellent taste in hymns—you should have heard her read one aloud the other day, she marked the rhythm with so much gloating, dissenter sentiment. What is wrong, then? says you. Low in your ear—and don't let the papers get hold of it—she is of no family. None, they say; literally a common woman. Of course, we have out-islanders, who *may* be villeins; but we give them the benefit of the doubt, which is impossible with Helen of Vailima; our blot, our pitted speck. The pitted speck I have said is our precentor. It is always a woman who starts Samoan song; the men who sing second do not enter for a bar or two. Poor, dear Faauma, the unchaste, the extruded Eve of our Paradise, knew only two hymns; but Helen seems to know the whole repertory, and the

morning prayers go far more lively in consequence.—Lafaele, provost of the cattle. The cattle are Jack, my horse, quite converted, my wife rides him now, and he is as steady as a doctor's cob; Tifaga Jack, a circus horse, my mother's piebald, bought from a passing circus; Belle's mare, now in childbed or next door, confound the slut! Musu—amusingly translated the other day "don't want to," literally cross, but always in the sense of stubbornness and resistance—my wife's little dark-brown mare, with a white star on her forehead, whom I have been riding of late to steady her—she has no vices, but is unused, skittish and uneasy, and wants a lot of attention and humouring; lastly (of saddle horses) Luna—not the Latin *moon*, the Hawaiian *overseer*, but it's pronounced the same—a pretty little mare too, but scarce at all broken, a bad bucker, and has to be ridden with a stock-whip and be brought back with her rump criss-crossed like a clan tartan; the two cart horses, now only used with pack-saddles; two cows, one in the straw (I trust) to-morrow, a third cow, the Jersey—whose milk and temper are alike subjects of admiration—she gives good exercise to the farming saunterer, and refreshes him on his return with cream; two calves, a bull, and a cow; God knows how many ducks and chickens, and for a wager not even God knows how many cats; twelve horses, seven horses, five kine: is not this Babylon the Great which I have builded? Call it *Subpriorsford.*

Two nights ago the club had its first meeting; only twelve were present, but it went very well. I was not there, I had ridden down the night before after dinner on my endless business, took a cup of tea in the mission like an ass, then took a cup of coffee like a fool at Haggard's, then fell into a discussion with the American Consul. . . . I went to bed at Haggard's, came suddenly broad awake, and lay sleepless the live night. It felt chill, I had only a sheet, and had to make a light and range the house for a cover—I found one in the hall, a macintosh. So back

to my sleepless bed, and to lie there till dawn. In the morning I had a longish ride to take in a day of a blinding, staggering sun, and got home by eleven, our luncheon hour, with my head rather swimmy ; the only time I have *feared* the sun since I was in Samoa. However, I got no harm, but did not go to the club, lay off, lazied, played the pipe, and read a novel by James Payn—sometimes quite interesting, and in one place really very funny with the quaint humour of the man. Much interested the other day. As I rode past a house, I saw where a Samoan had written a word on a board, and there was an ⅄, perfectly formed, but upside down. You never saw such a thing in Europe ; but it is as common as dirt in Polynesia. Men's names are tattooed on the forearm ; it is common to find a subverted letter tattooed there. Here is a tempting problem for psychologists.

I am now on terms again with the German consulate, I know not for how long ; not, of course, with the President, which I find a relief ; still, with the Chief Justice and the English consul. For Haggard, I have a genuine affection ; he is a loveable man.

Wearyful man ! " Here is the yarn of Loudon Dodd, *not as he told it, but as it was afterwards written.*" [1] These words were left out by some carelessness, and I think I have been thrice tackled about them. Grave them in your mind and wear them on your forehead.

The Lang story will have very little about the treasure ; the Master [2] will appear ; and it is to a great extent a tale of Prince Charlie *after* the '45, and a love story forbye : the hero is a melancholy exile, and marries a young woman who interests the prince, and there is the devil to pay. I think the Master kills him in a duel, but don't know yet, not having yet seen my second heroine. No—the Master

[1] In answer to the obvious remark that the length and style of *The Wrecker*, then running in Scribner's Magazine, were out of keeping with what professed at the outset to be a spoken yarn.

[2] Of Ballantrae : the story is the unfinished *Young Chevalier*.

doesn't kill him, they fight, he is wounded, and the Master plays *deus ex machina*. *I think* just now of calling it *The Tail of the Race;* no—heavens! I never saw till this moment—but of course nobody but myself would ever understand Mill-Race, they would think of a quarter-mile. So—I am nameless again. My melancholy young man is to be quite a Romeo. Yes, I'll name the book from him: *Dyce of Ythan*—pronounce Eethan.

Dyce of Ythan
by R. L. S.

O, Shovel—Shovel waits his turn, he and his ancestors. I would have tackled him before, but my *State Trials* have never come. So that I have now quite planned:—

Dyce of Ythan. (Historical, 1750.)
Sophia Scarlet. (To-day.)
The Shovels of Newton French. (Historical, 1650 to 1830.)

And quite planned and part written:—

The Pearl Fisher. (To-day.) (With Lloyd: a machine.)[1]
David Balfour. (Historical, 1751.)

And, by a strange exception for R. L. S., all in the third person except D. B.

I don't know what day this is now (the 29th), but I have finished my two chapters, ninth and tenth, of *Samoa* in time for the mail, and feel almost at peace. The tenth was the hurricane, a difficult problem; it so tempted one to be literary; and I feel sure the less of that there is in my little handbook, the more chance it has of some utility.

[1] Afterwards changed into *The Ebb Tide*.

Then the events are complicated, seven ships to tell of. and sometimes three of them together; O, it was quite a job. But I think I have my facts pretty correct, and for once, in my sickening yarn, they are handsome facts: creditable to all concerned; not to be written of—and I should think, scarce to be read—without a thrill. I doubt I have got no hurricane into it, the intricacies of the yarn absorbing me too much. But there—it's done somehow, and time presses hard on my heels. The book, with my best expedition, may come just too late to be of use. In which case I shall have made a handsome present of some months of my life for nothing and to nobody. Well, through Her the most ancient heavens are fresh and strong.[1]

30*th*.—After I had written you, I re-read my hurricane, which is very poor; the life of the journalist is hard, another couple of writings and I could make a good thing, I believe, and it must go as it is! But, of course, this book is not written for honour and glory, and the few who will read it may not know the difference. Very little time. I go down with the mail shortly, dine at the Chinese restaurant, and go to the club to dance with islandresses. Think of my going out once a week to dance.

Politics are on the full job again, and we don't know what is to come next. I think the whole treaty *raj* seems quite played out! They have taken to bribing the *faipule* men (parliament men) to stay in Mulinuu, we hear; but I have not yet sifted the rumour. I must say I shall be scarce surprised if it prove true; these rumours have the knack of being right.—Our weather this last month has been tremendously hot, not by the thermometer, which sticks at 86°, but to the sensation: no rain, no wind, and this the storm month. It looks ominous, and is certainly disagreeable.

No time to finish.—Yours ever, R. L. S.

[1] Wordsworth's *Ode to Duty*, a shade misquoted.

To E. L. Burlingame

The first sentences of the following refer to *A Footnote to History*, Chapter x. of which, relating to the hurricane of 1889, was first published in the Scots Observer, edited by Mr. Henley.

[*Vailima, March* 1892.]

MY DEAR BURLINGAME,—Herewith Chapters ix. and x., and I am left face to face with the horrors and dilemmas of the present regimen: pray for those that go down to the sea in ships. I have promised Henley shall have a chance to publish the hurricane chapter if he like, so please let the slips be sent *quam primum* to C. Baxter, W.S., 11 S. Charlotte Street, Edinburgh. I got on mighty quick with that chapter—about five days of the toughest kind of work. God forbid I should ever have such another pirn to wind! When I invent a language, there shall be a direct and an indirect pronoun differently declined—then writing would be some fun.

DIRECT	INDIRECT
He	Tu
Him	Tum
His	Tus

Ex.: *He* seized *tum* by *tus* throat; but *tu* at the same moment caught *him* by *his* hair. A fellow could write hurricanes with an inflection like that! Yet there would be difficulties too.

Please add to my former orders—

Le Chevalier Des Touches
Les Diaboliques . . } by Barbey d'Aurévilly.

Correspondance de Henri Beyle (Stendahl).

Yours sincerely, R. L. Stevenson.

To the Rev. S. J. Whitmee

In this letter the essential points of Stevenson's policy for Samoa are defined more clearly than anywhere else. His correspondent, an

experienced missionary who had been absent from the islands and lately returned, and whom Stevenson describes as being of a nature essentially "childlike and candid," had been induced to support the idea of a one-man power as necessary for putting an end to the existing confusion, and to suggest the Chief Justice, Mr. Cedercrantz, as the person to wield such power. In the present letter and a subsequent conversation Stevenson was able to persuade his correspondent to abandon at least that part of his proposal which concerned the Chief Justice.

[*Vailima*] *Sunday. Better Day, Better Deed.*
April 24th, 1892.

Private and confidential.

DEAR MR. WHITMEE,—I have reflected long and fully on your paper, and at your kind request give you the benefit of my last thoughts.

I. I cannot bring myself to welcome your idea of one man. I fear we are too far away from any moderative influence; and suppose it to be true that the paper is bought, we should not even have a voice. Could we be sure to get a Gordon or a Lawrence, ah! very well. But in this out-of-the-way place, are these extreme experiments wise? Remember Baker; with much that he has done, I am in full sympathy; and the man, though wholly insincere, is a thousand miles from ill-meaning; and see to what excesses he was forced or led.

II. But I willingly admit the idea is possible with the right man, and this brings me with greater conviction to my next point. I cannot endorse, and I would rather beg of you to reconsider, your recommendation of the Chief Justice. I told you the man has always attracted me, yet as I have earnestly reconsidered the points against him, I find objection growing. . . .

But there is yet another argument I have to lay before you. We are both to write upon this subject. Many of our opinions coincide, and, as I said the other day, on these we may reasonably suppose that we are not far wrong. Now here is a point on which we shall directly counter. No doubt but this will lessen the combined

weight of our arguments where they coincide. And to avoid this effect, it might seem worth while to you to modify or cancel the last paragraph of your article.

III. But I now approach what seems to me by far the most important. White man here, white man there, Samoa is to stand or fall (bar actual seizure) on the Samoan question. And upon this my mind is now really made up. I do not believe in Laupepa alone ; I do not believe in Mataafa alone. I know that their conjunction implies peace ; I am persuaded that their separation means either war or paralysis. It is the result of the past, which we cannot change, but which we must accept and use or suffer by. I have now made up my mind to do all that I may be able—little as it is—to effect a reconciliation between these two men Laupepa and Mataafa ; persuaded as I am that there is the one door of hope. And it is my intention before long to approach both in this sense. Now, from the course of our interview, I was pleased to see that you were, if not equally strong with myself, at least inclined to much the same opinion. And in a carefully weighed paper, such as that you read me, I own I should be pleased to have this cardinal matter touched upon. At home it is not, it cannot be, understood : Mataafa is thought a rebel ; the Germans profit by the thought to pursue their career of vengeance for Fagalii ; the two men are perpetually offered as alternatives—they are no such thing—they are complementary ; authority, supposing them to survive, will be impossible without both. They were once friends, fools and meddlers set them at odds, they must be friends again or have so much wisdom and public virtue as to pretend a friendship. There is my policy for Samoa. And I wish you would at least touch upon that point, I care not how ; because, although I am far from supposing you feel it to be necessary in the same sense or to the same degree as I do, I am well aware that no man knows Samoa but must see its huge advantages. Excuse this long and tedious lecture, which I see I have

to mark private and confidential, or I might get into deep water, and believe me, yours very truly,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

TO CHARLES BAXTER

The maps herein bespoken do not adorn the ordinary editions of *Catriona*, only the Edinburgh edition, for which they were executed by Messrs. Bartholomew in a manner that would have rejoiced the writer's heart.

[*Vailima*] *April* 28, 1892.

MY DEAR CHARLES,—I have just written the dedication of *David Balfour* to you, and haste to put a job in your hands. This is a map of the environs of Edinburgh *circa* 1750. It must contain Hope Park, Hunter's Bog, Calton Hill, the Mouter Hill, Lang Dykes, Nor' Loch, West Kirk, Village of Dean, pass down the water to Stockbridge, Silver Mills, the two mill lakes there, with a wood on the south side of the south one which I saw marked on a plan in the British Museum, Broughton, Picardy, Leith Walk, Leith, Pilrig, Lochend, Figgate Whins. And I would like a piece in a corner, giving for the same period Figgate Whins, Musselburgh, Inveresk, Prestonpans, battlefield of Gladsmuir, Cockenzie, Gullane —which I spell Gillane—Fidra, Dirleton, North Berwick Law, Whitekirk, Tantallon Castle and Castleton, Scougal and Auldhame, the Bass, the Glenteithy rocks, Satan's Bush, Wildfire rocks, and, if possible, the May. If need were, I would not stick at two maps. If there is but one, say, *Plan to illustrate David Balfour's adventures in the Lothians.* If two, call the first *Plan to illustrate David Balfour's adventures about the city of Edinburgh*, and the second, *Plan to illustrate David Balfour's adventures in East Lothian.* I suppose there must be a map-maker of some taste in Edinburgh; I wish few other names in, but what I have given, as far as possible. As soon as may be I will let you have the text, when you might

even find some amusement in seeing that the maps fill the bill. If your map-maker be a poor creature, plainness is best; if he were a fellow of some genuine go, he might give it a little of the bird's-eye quality. I leave this to your good taste. If I have time I will copy the dedication to go herewith; I am pleased with it. The first map (suppose we take two) would go in at the beginning, the second at Chapter xi. The topography is very much worked into the story, and I have alluded in the dedication to our common fancy for exploring Auld Reekie.

The list of books came duly, for which many thanks. I am plunged to the nostrils in various business.—Yours ever, R. L. S.

To Sidney Colvin

[*Vailima*] *May* 1*st*, 1892.

my dear colvin,—As I rode down last night about six, I saw a sight I must try to tell you of. In front of me, right over the top of the forest into which I was descending, was a vast cloud. The front of it accurately represented the somewhat rugged, long-nosed, and beetle-browed profile of a man, crowned by a huge Kalmuck cap; the flesh part was of a heavenly pink, the cap, the moustache, the eyebrows were of a bluish grey; to see this with its childish exactitude of design and colour, and hugeness of scale—it covered at least 25°—held me spell-bound. As I continued to gaze, the expression began to change; he had the exact air of closing one eye, dropping his jaw, and drawing down his nose; had the thing not been so imposing, I could have smiled; and then almost in a moment, a shoulder of leaden-coloured bank drove in front and blotted it. My attention spread to the rest of the cloud, and it was a thing to worship. It rose from the horizon, and its top was within thirty degrees of the zenith; the lower parts were like a glacier in shadow, varying from dark indigo to a clouded white in exquisite

gradations. The sky behind, so far as I could see, was all of a blue already enriched and darkened by the night, for the hill had what lingered of the sunset. But the top of my Titanic cloud flamed in broad sunlight, with the most excellent softness and brightness of fire and jewels, enlightening all the world. It must have been far higher than Mount Everest, and its glory, as I gazed up at it out of the night, was beyond wonder. Close by rode the little crescent moon ; and right over its western horn, a great planet of about equal lustre with itself. The dark woods below were shrill with that noisy business of the birds' evening worship. When I returned, after eight, the moon was near down ; she seemed little brighter than before, but now that the cloud no longer played its part of a nocturnal sun, we could see that sight, so rare with us at home that it was counted a portent, so customary in the tropics, of the dark sphere with its little gilt band upon the belly. The planet had been setting faster, and was now below the crescent. They were still of an equal brightness.

I could not resist trying to reproduce this in words, as a specimen of these incredibly beautiful and imposing meteors of the tropic sky that make so much of my pleasure here ; though a ship's deck is the place to enjoy them. O what *awful* scenery, from a ship's deck, in the tropics ! People talk about the Alps, but the clouds of the trade wind are alone for sublimity.

Now to try and tell you what has been happening. The state of these islands, and of Mataafa and Laupepa (Malietoas *ambo*), had been much on my mind. I went to the priests and sent a message to Mataafa, at a time when it was supposed he was about to act. He did not act, delaying in true native style, and I determined I should go to visit him. I have been very good not to go sooner ; to live within a few miles of a rebel camp, to be a novelist, to have all my family forcing me to go, and to refrain all these months, counts for virtue. But

hearing that several people had gone and the government done nothing to punish them, and having an errand there which was enough to justify myself in my own eyes, I half determined to go, and spoke of it with the half-caste priest. And here (confound it) up came Laupepa and his guards to call on me; we kept him to lunch, and the old gentleman was very good and amiable. He asked me why I had not been to see him? I reminded him a law had been made, and told him I was not a small boy to go and ask leave of the consuls, and perhaps be refused. He told me to pay no attention to the law but come when I would, and begged me to name a day to lunch. The next day (I think it was) early in the morning, a man appeared; he had metal buttons like a policeman—but he was none of our Apia force; he was a rebel policeman, and had been all night coming round inland through the forest from Malie. He brought a letter addressed

I lana susuga To his Excellency
Misi Mea. Mr. Thingumbob.

(So as not to compromise me.) I can read Samoan now, though not speak it. It was to ask me for last Wednesday. My difficulty was great; I had no man here who was fit, or who would have cared, to write for me; and I had to postpone the visit. So I gave up half-a-day with a groan, went down to the priests, arranged for Monday week to go to Malie, and named Thursday as my day to lunch with Laupepa. I was sharply ill on Wednesday, mail day. But on Thursday I had to trail down and go through the dreary business of a feast, in the King's wretched shanty, full in view of the President's fine new house; it made my heart burn.

This gave me my chance to arrange a private interview with the king, and I decided to ask Mr. Whitmee to be my interpreter. On Friday, being too much exhausted to go down, I begged him to come up. He did. I told him the heads of what I meant to say; and he not only

consented, but said, if we got on well with the king, he would even proceed with me to Malie. Yesterday, in consequence, I rode down to W.'s house by eight in the morning; waited till ten; received a message that the king was stopped by a meeting with the president and *faipule;* made another engagement for seven at night; came up; went down; waited till eight, and came away again, *bredouille,* and a dead body. The poor, weak, enslaved king had not dared to come to me even in secret. Now I have to-day for a rest, and to-morrow to Malie. Shall I be suffered to embark? It is very doubtful; they are on the trail. On Thursday, a policeman came up to me and began that a boy had been to see him, and said I was going to see Mataafa.—"And what did you say?" said I.—"I told him I did not know about where you were going," said he.—"A very good answer," said I, and turned away. It is lashing rain to-day, but to-morrow, rain or shine, I must at least make the attempt; and I am so weary, and the weather looks so bad. I could half wish they would arrest me on the beach. All this bother and pother to try and bring a little chance of peace; all this opposition and obstinacy in people who remain here by the mere forbearance of Mataafa, who has a great force within six miles of their government buildings, which are indeed only the residences of white officials. To understand how I have been occupied, you must know that "Misi Mea" has had another letter, and this time had to answer himself; think of doing so in a language so obscure to me, with the aid of a Bible, concordance, and dictionary! What a wonderful Baboo compilation it must have been! I positively expected to hear news of its arrival in Malie by the sound of laughter. I doubt if you will be able to read this scrawl, but I have managed to scramble somehow up to date; and to-morrow, one way or another, should be interesting. But as for me, I am a wreck, as I have no doubt style and handwriting both testify.

8 P.M.—Wonderfully rested; feel almost fit for to-morrow's dreary excursion—not that it will be dreary if the weather favour, but otherwise it will be death; and a native feast, and I fear I am in for a big one, is a thing I loathe. I wonder if you can really conceive me as a politician in this extra-mundane sphere—presiding at public meetings, drafting proclamations, receiving mis-addressed letters that have been carried all night through tropical forests? It seems strange indeed, and to you, who know me really, must seem stranger. I do not say I am free from the itch of meddling, but God knows this is no tempting job to meddle in; I smile at picturesque circumstances like the Misi Mea (*Monsieur Chose* is the exact equivalent) correspondence, but the business as a whole bores and revolts me. I do nothing and say nothing; and then a day comes, and I say "this can go on no longer."

9.30 P.M.—The wretched native dilatoriness finds me out. News has just come that we must embark at six to-morrow; I have divided the night in watches, and hope to be called to-morrow at four and get under way by five. It is a great chance if it be managed; but I have given directions and lent my own clock to the boys, and hope the best. If I get called at four we shall do it nicely. Good-night; I must turn in.

May 3rd.—Well, we did get off by about 5.30, or, by'r lady! quarter to six; myself on Donald, the huge grey cart-horse, with a ship-bag across my saddle bow, Fanny on Musu and Belle on Jack. We were all feeling pretty tired and sick, and I looked like heaven knows what on the cart-horse: "death on the pale horse," I suggested—and young Hunt the missionary, who met me to-day on the same charger, squinted up at my perch and remarked, "There's a sweet little cherub that sits up aloft." The boat was ready and we set off down the lagoon about seven, four oars, and Talolo, my cook, steering.

May 9th (*Monday anyway*).—And see what good reso-

lutions came to! Here is all this time past, and no speed made. Well, we got to Malie and were received with the most friendly consideration by the rebel chief. Belle and Fanny were obviously thought to be my two wives; they were served their kava together, as were Mataafa and myself. Talolo utterly broke down as interpreter; long speeches were made to me by Mataafa and his orators, of which he could make nothing but they were "very much surprised"—his way of pronouncing obliged—and as he could understand nothing that fell from me except the same form of words, the dialogue languished and all business had to be laid aside. We had kava,[1] and then a dish of arrowroot; one end of the house was screened off for us with a fine tapa, and we lay and slept, the three of us, heads and tails, upon the mats till dinner. After dinner his illegitimate majesty and myself had a walk, and talked as well as my twopenny Samoan would admit. Then there was a dance to amuse the ladies before the house, and we came back by moonlight, the sky piled full of high faint clouds that long preserved some of the radiance of the sunset. The lagoon was very shallow; we continually struck, for the moon was young and the light baffling; and for a long time we were accompanied by, and passed and repassed, a huge whale-boat from Savaii, pulling perhaps twelve oars, and containing perhaps forty

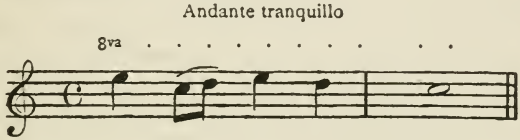
[1] "Kava, properly Ava, is a drink more or less intoxicating, made from the root of the *Piper Methysticum*, a Pepper plant. The root is grated: formerly it was chewed by fair damsels. The root thus broken up is rubbed about in a great pail, with water slowly added. A strainer of bark cloth is plunged into it at times, and wrung out so as to carry away the small fragments of root. The drink is made and used in ceremony. Every detail is regulated by rules, and the manner of the mixture of the water, the straining, the handling of the cup, the drinking out of it and returning, should all be done according to a well-established manner and in certain cadences." I borrow this explanation from the late Mr. Lafarge's notes to his catalogue of South Sea Drawings. It may serve to make clearer several passages in later letters of the present collection. Readers of the late Lord Pembroke's *South Sea Bubbles* will remember the account of this beverage and its preparation in Chap. VIII. of that volume.

people who sang in time as they went. So to the hotel, where we slept, and returned the next Tuesday morning on the three same steeds.

Meanwhile my business was still untransacted. And on Saturday morning, I sent down and arranged with Charlie Taylor to go down that afternoon. I had scarce got the saddle-bags fixed and had not yet mounted, when the rain began. But it was no use delaying now; off I went in a wild waterspout to Apia; found Charlie (Salé) Taylor—a sesquipedalian young half-caste—not yet ready, had a snack of bread and cheese at the hotel while waiting him, and then off to Malie. It rained all the way, seven miles; the road, which begins in triumph, dwindles down to a nasty, boggy, rocky footpath with weeds up to a horseman's knees; and there are eight pig fences to jump, nasty beastly jumps—the next morning we found one all messed with blood where a horse had come to grief—but my Jack is a clever fencer; and altogether we made good time, and got to Malie about dark. It is a village of very fine native houses, high, domed, oval buildings, open at the sides, or only closed with slatted Venetians. To be sure, Mataafa's is not the worst. It was already quite dark within, only a little fire of cocoa-shell blazed in the midst and showed us four servants; the chief was in his chapel, whence we heard the sound of chaunting. Presently he returned; Taylor and I had our soaking clothes changed, family worship was held, kava brewed, I was exhibited to the chiefs as a man who had ridden through all that rain and risked deportation to serve their master; they were bidden learn my face, and remember upon all occasions to help and serve me. Then dinner, and politics, and fine speeches until twelve at night—O, and some more kava—when I could sit up no longer; my usual bed-time is eight, you must remember. Then one end of the house was screened off for me alone, and a bed made—you never saw such a couch—I believe of nearly fifty (half at least) fine mats, by Mataafa's daughter,

Kalala. Here I reposed alone; and on the other side of the tapa, Majesty and his household. Armed guards and a drummer patrolled about the house all night; they had no shift, poor devils; but stood to arms from sun-down to sun-up.

About four in the morning, I was awakened by the sound of a whistle pipe blown outside on the dark, very softly and to a pleasing simple air; I really think I have hit the first phrase:



It sounded very peaceful, sweet and strange in the dark; and I found this was a part of the routine of my rebel's night, and it was done (he said) to give good dreams. By a little before six, Taylor and I were in the saddle again fasting. My riding boots were so wet I could not get them on, so I must ride barefoot. The morning was fair but the roads very muddy, the weeds soaked us nearly to the waist, Salé was twice spilt at the fences, and we got to Apia a bedraggled enough pair. All the way along the coast, the paté (small wooden drum) was beating in the villages and the people crowding to the churches in their fine clothes. Thence through the mangrove swamp, among the black mud and the green mangroves, and the black and scarlet crabs, to Mulinuu, to the doctor's, where I had an errand, and so to the inn to breakfast about nine. After breakfast I rode home. Conceive such an outing, remember the pallid brute that lived in Skerryvore like a weevil in a biscuit, and receive the intelligence that I was rather the better for my journey. Twenty miles' ride, sixteen fences taken, ten of the miles in a drenching rain, seven of them fasting and in the morning chill, and six stricken hours' political discussions by an interpreter; to

say nothing of sleeping in a native house, at which many of our excellent literati would look askance of itself.

You are to understand: if I take all this bother, it is not only from a sense of duty, or a love of meddling—damn the phrase, take your choice—but from a great affection for Mataafa. He is a beautiful, sweet old fellow, and he and I grew quite fulsome on Saturday night about our sentiments. I had a messenger from him to-day with a flannel undershirt which I had left behind like a gibbering idiot; and perpetrated in reply another Baboo letter. It rains again to-day without mercy; blessed, welcome rains, making up for the paucity of the late wet season; and when the showers slacken, I can hear my stream roaring in the hollow, and tell myself that the cacaos are drinking deep. I am desperately hunted to finish my Samoa book before the mail goes; this last chapter is equally delicate and necessary. The prayers of the congregation are requested. Eheu! and it will be ended before this letter leaves and printed in the States ere you can read this scribble. The first dinner gong has sounded; *je vous salue, monsieur et cher confrère. Tofa, soifua!* Sleep! long life! as our Samoan salutation of farewell runs.

Friday, May 13*th.*—Well, the last chapter, by far the most difficult and ungrateful, is well under way, I have been from six to seven hours upon it daily since I last wrote; and that is all I have done forbye working at Samoan rather hard, and going down on Wednesday evening to the club. I make some progress now at the language; I am teaching Belle, which clears and exercises myself. I am particularly taken with the *finesse* of the pronouns. The pronouns are all dual and plural, and the first person, both in the dual and plural, has a special exclusive and inclusive form. You can conceive what fine effects of precision and distinction can be reached in certain cases. Take Ruth, i. *vv.* 8 to 13, and imagine how those pronouns come in; it is exquisitely elegant,

and makes the mouth of the *littérateur* to water. I am going to exercitate my pupil over those verses to-day for pronoun practice.

Tuesday.—Yesterday came yours. Well, well, if the dears prefer a week, why, I'll give them ten days, but the real document, from which I have scarcely varied, ran for one night.[1] I think you seem scarcely fair to Wiltshire, who had surely, under his beast-ignorant ways, right noble qualities. And I think perhaps you scarce do justice to the fact that this is a place of realism *à outrance;* nothing extenuated or coloured. Looked at so, is it not, with all its tragic features, wonderfully idyllic, with great beauty of scene and circumstance? And will you please to observe that almost all that is ugly is in the whites? I'll apologise for Papa Randal if you like; but if I told you the whole truth—for I did extenuate there! —and he seemed to me essential as a figure, and essential as a pawn in the game, Wiltshire's disgust for him being one of the small, efficient motives in the story. Now it would have taken a fairish dose to disgust Wiltshire.— Again, the idea of publishing the *Beach* substantively is dropped—at once, both on account of expostulation, and because it measured shorter than I had expected. And it was only taken up, when the proposed volume, *Beach de Mar*, petered out. It petered out thus: the chief of the short stories got sucked into *Sophia Scarlet*—and *Sophia* is a book I am much taken with, and mean to get to, as soon as—but not before—I have done *David Balfour* and *The Young Chevalier.* So you see you are like to hear no more of the Pacific or the nineteenth century for a while. *The Young Chevalier* is a story of sentiment and passion, which I mean to write a little differently from what I have been doing—if I can hit the key; rather more of a sentimental tremolo to it. It may thus help to prepare me for *Sophia*, which is to contain three ladies,

[1] Referring to the marriage contract in the *Beach of Falesá:* see above, p. 152.

and a kind of a love affair between the heroine and a dying planter who is a poet! large orders for R. L. S.

O the German taboo is quite over; no soul attempts to support the C. J. or the President, they are past hope; the whites have just refused their taxes—I mean the council has refused to call for them, and if the council consented, nobody would pay; 'tis a farce, and the curtain is going to fall briefly. Consequently in my History, I say as little as may be of the two dwindling stars. Poor devils! I liked the one, and the other has a little wife, now lying in! There was no man born with so little animosity as I. When I heard the C. J. was in low spirits and never left his house, I could scarce refrain from going to him.

It was a fine feeling to have finished the History; there ought to be a future state to reward that grind! It's not literature, you know; only journalism, and pedantic journalism. I had but the one desire, to get the thing as right as might be, and avoid false concords —even if that! And it was more than there was time for. However, there it is: done. And if Samoa turns up again, my book has to be counted with, being the only narrative extant. Milton and I—if you kindly excuse the juxtaposition—harnessed ourselves to strange waggons, and I at least will be found to have plodded very soberly with my load. There is not even a good sentence in it, but perhaps—I don't know—it may be found an honest, clear volume.

Wednesday.—Never got a word set down, and continues on Thursday, 19th May, his own marriage day as ever was. News; yes. The C. J. came up to call on us! After five months' cessation on my side, and a decidedly painful interchange of letters, I could not go down—*could* not—to see him. My three ladies received him, however; he was very agreeable as usual, but refused wine, beer, water, lemonade, chocolate, and at last a cigarette. Then my wife asked him, "So you refuse to break bread?" and

he waved his hands amiably in answer. All my three ladies received the same impression that he had serious matters in his mind: now we hear he is quite cock-a-hoop since the mail came, and going about as before his troubles darkened. But what did he want with me? 'Tis thought he had received a despatch—and that he misreads it (so we fully believe) to the effect that they are to have war ships at command and can make their little war after all. If it be so, and they do it, it will be the meanest wanton slaughter of poor men for the salaries of two white failures. But what was his errand with me? Perhaps to warn me that unless I behave he now hopes to be able to pack me off in the *Curaçoa* when she comes.

I have celebrated my holiday from *Samoa* by a plunge at the beginning of *The Young Chevalier*. I am afraid my touch is a little broad in a love story; I can't mean one thing and write another. As for women, I am no more in any fear of them; I can do a sort all right; age makes me less afraid of a petticoat, but I am a little in fear of grossness. However, this David Balfour's love affair, that's all right—might be read out to a mother's meeting—or a daughters' meeting. The difficulty in a love yarn, which dwells at all on love, is the dwelling on one string; it is manifold, I grant, but the root fact is there unchanged, and the sentiment being very intense, and already very much handled in letters, positively calls for a little pawing and gracing. With a writer of my prosaic literalness and pertinency of point of view, this all shoves toward grossness—positively even toward the far more damnable *closeness*. This has kept me off the sentiment hitherto, and now I am to try: Lord! Of course Meredith can do it, and so could Shakespeare; but with all my romance, I am a realist and a prosaist, and a most fanatical lover of plain physical sensations plainly and expressly rendered; hence my perils. To do love in the same spirit as I did (for instance) D. Balfour's

fatigue in the heather; my dear sir, there were grossness —ready made! And hence, how to sugar? However, I have nearly done with Marie-Madeleine, and am in good hopes of Marie-Salomé, the real heroine; the other is only a prologuial heroine to introduce the hero.

Friday.—Anyway, the first prologuial episode is done, and Fanny likes it. There are only four characters: Francis Blair of Balmile (Jacobite Lord Gladsmuir) my hero; the Master of Ballantrae; Paradou, a wine-seller of Avignon; Marie-Madeleine his wife. These two last I am now done with, and I think they are successful, and I hope I have Balmile on his feet; and the style seems to be found. It is a little charged and violent; sins on the side of violence; but I think will carry the tale. I think it is a good idea so to introduce my hero, being made love to by an episodic woman. This queer tale—I mean queer for me—has taken a great hold upon me. Where the devil shall I go next? This is simply the tale of a *coup de tête* of a young man and a young woman; with a nearly, perhaps a wholly, tragic sequel, which I desire to make thinkable right through, and sensible; to make the reader, as far as I shall be able, eat and drink and breathe it. Marie-Salomé des Saintes-Maries is, I think, the heroine's name; she has got to *be* yet: *sursum corda!* So has the young Chevalier, whom I have not yet touched, and who comes next in order. Characters: Balmile, or Lord Gladsmuir, *comme vous voulez;* Prince Charlie; Earl Marischal; Master of Ballantrae; and a spy, and Dr. Archie Campbell, and a few nondescripts; then, of women, Marie-Salomé and Flora Blair; seven at the outside; really four full lengths, and I suppose a half-dozen episodic profiles. How I must bore you with these ineptitudes! Have patience. I am going to bed; it is (of all hours) eleven. I have been forced in (since I began to write to you) to blatter to Fanny on the subject of my heroine, there being two *cruces* as to her life and history: how came she alone? and how far did she go with the

Chevalier? The second must answer itself when I get near enough to see. The first is a back-breaker. Yet I know there are many reasons why a *fille de famille*, romantic, adventurous, ambitious, innocent of the world, might run from her home in these days; might she not have been threatened with a convent? might there not be some Huguenot business mixed in? Here am I, far from books; if you can help me with a suggestion, I shall say God bless you. She has to be new run away from a strict family, well-justified in her own wild but honest eyes, and meeting these three men, Charles Edward, Marischal, and Balmile, through the accident of a fire at an inn. She must not run from a marriage, I think; it would bring her in the wrong frame of mind. Once I can get her, *sola*, on the highway, all were well with my narrative. Perpend. And help if you can.

Lafaele, long (I hope) familiar to you, has this day received the visit of his *son* from Tonga; and the *son* proves to be a very pretty, attractive young daughter! I gave all the boys kava in honour of her arrival; along with a lean, side-whiskered Tongan, dimly supposed to be Lafaele's step-father; and they have been having a good time; in the end of my verandah, I hear Simi, my present incapable steward, talking Tongan with the nondescript papa. Simi, our out-door boy, burst a succession of blood-vessels over our work, and I had to make a position for the wreck of one of the noblest figures of a man I ever saw. I believe I may have mentioned the other day how I had to put my horse to the trot, the canter and (at last) the gallop to run him down. In a photograph I hope to send you (perhaps with this) you will see Simi standing in the verandah in profile. As a steward, one of his chief points is to break crystal; he is great on fracture—what do I say?—explosion! He cleans a glass, and the shards scatter like a comet's bowels.

N.B.—If I should by any chance be deported, the first of the rules hung up for that occasion is to communicate

with you by telegraph.—Mind, I do not fear it, but it *is* possible.

Monday, 25th.—We have had a devil of a morning of upset and bustle; the bronze candlestick Faauma has returned to the family, in time to take her position of step-mamma, and it is pretty to see how the child is at once at home, and all her terrors ended.

27th. Mail day.—And I don't know that I have much to report. I may have to leave for Malie as soon as these mail packets are made up. 'Tis a necessity (if it be one) I rather deplore. I think I should have liked to lazy; but I dare say all it means is the delay of a day or so in harking back to David Balfour; that respectable youth chides at being left (where he is now) in Glasgow with the Lord Advocate, and after five years in the British Linen, who shall blame him? I was all forenoon yesterday down in Apia, dictating, and Lloyd typewriting, the conclusion of *Samoa;* and then at home correcting till the dinner bell; and in the evening again till eleven of the clock. This morning I have made up most of my packets, and I think my mail is all ready but two more, and the tag of this. I would never deny (as D. B. might say) that I was rather tired of it. But I have a damned good dose of the devil in my pipe-stem atomy; I have had my little holiday outing in my kick at *The Young Chevalier*, and I guess I can settle to *David Balfour* to-morrow or Friday like a little man. I wonder if any one had ever more energy upon so little strength?—I know there is a frost; the Samoa book can only increase that—I can't help it, that book is not written for me but for Miss Manners; but I mean to break that frost inside two years, and pull off a big success, and Vanity whispers in my ear that I have the strength. If I haven't, whistle ower the lave o't! I can do without glory and perhaps the time is not far off when I can do without coin. It is a time coming soon enough, anyway; and I have endured some two and forty years without public shame, and had a good time

as I did it. If only I could secure a violent death, what a fine success! I wish to die in my boots; no more Land of Counterpane for me. To be drowned, to be shot, to be thrown from a horse—ay, to be hanged, rather than pass again through that slow dissolution.

I fancy this gloomy ramble is caused by a twinge of age; I put on an under-shirt yesterday (it was the only one I could find) that barely came under my trousers; and just below it, a fine healthy rheumatism has now settled like a fire in my hip. From such small causes do these valuable considerations flow!

I shall now say adieu, dear Sir, having ten rugged miles before me and the horrors of a native feast and parliament without an interpreter, for to-day I go alone.—
Yours ever, R. L. S.

To Sidney Colvin

Describing a family expedition to visit Mataafa at Malie.

[*Vailima*] *Sunday, 29th May* [1892].

How am I to overtake events? On Wednesday, as soon as my mail was finished, I had a wild whirl to look forward to. Immediately after dinner, Belle, Lloyd, and I set out on horseback, they to the club, I to Haggard's, thence to the hotel, where I had supper ready for them. All next day we hung round Apia with our whole house-crowd in Sunday array, hoping for the mail steamer with a menagerie on board. No such luck; the ship delayed; and at last, about three, I had to send them home again, a failure of a day's pleasuring that does not bear to be discussed. Lloyd was so sickened that he returned the same night to Vailima, Belle and I held on, sat most of the evening on the hotel verandah stricken silly with fatigue and disappointment, and genuine sorrow for our poor boys and girls, and got to bed with rather dismal appreciations of the morrow.

These were more than justified, and yet I never had a jollier day than Friday 27th. By 7.30 Belle and I had breakfast; we had scarce done before my mother was at the door on horseback, and a boy at her heels to take her not very dashing charger home again. By 8.10 we were all on the landing pier, and it was 9.20 before we had got away in a boat with two inches of green wood on the keel of her, no rudder, no mast, no sail, no boat flag, two defective rowlocks, two wretched apologies for oars, and two boys—one a Tongan half-caste, one a white lad, son of the Tonga schoolmaster, and a sailor lad—to pull us. All this was our first taste of the tender mercies of Taylor (the sesquipedalian half-caste introduced two letters back, I believe). We had scarce got round Mulinuu when Salé Taylor's heart misgave him; he thought we had missed the tide; called a halt, and set off ashore to find canoes. Two were found; in one my mother and I were embarked with the two biscuit tins (my present to the feast), and the bag with our dry clothes, on which my mother was perched—and her cap was on the top of it—feminine hearts please sympathise; all under the guidance of Salé. In the other Belle and our guest; Tauilo, a chief-woman, the mother of my cook, were to have followed. And the boys were to have been left with the boat. But Tauilo refused. And the four, Belle, Tauilo, Frank the sailor-boy, and Jimmie the Tongan half-caste, set off in the boat across that rapidly shoaling bay of the lagoon.

How long the next scene lasted, I could never tell. Salé was always trying to steal away with our canoe and leave the other four, probably for six hours, in an empty, leaky boat, without so much as an orange or a cocoanut on board, and under the direct rays of the sun. I had at last to stop him by taking the spare paddle off the outrigger and sticking it in the ground—depth, perhaps two feet—width of the bay, say three miles. At last I bid him land me and my mother and go back for the other ladies. "The coast is so rugged," said Salé.—"What?" I said,

"all these villages and no landing-place?"—"Such is the nature of Samoans," said he. Well, I'll find a landing-place, I thought; and presently I said, "Now we are going to land there."—"We can but try," said the bland Salé, with resignation. Never saw a better landing-place in my life. Here the boat joined us. My mother and Salé continued in the canoe alone, and Belle and I and Tauilo set off on foot for Malie. Tauilo was about the size of both of us put together and a piece over; she used us like a nurse with children. I had started barefoot; Belle had soon to pull off her gala shoes and stockings; the mud was as deep as to our knees, and so slippery that (moving, as we did, in Indian file, between dense scratching tufts of sensitive) Belle and I had to take hands to support each other, and Tauilo was steadying Belle from the rear. You can conceive we were got up to kill, Belle in an embroidered white dress and white hat, I in a suit of Bedford cords hot from the Sydney tailors; and conceive us, below, ink-black to the knees with adhesive clay, and above, streaming with heat. I suppose it was better than three miles, but at last we made the end of Malie. I asked if we could find no water to wash our feet; and our nursemaid guided us to a pool. We sat down on the pool side, and our nursemaid washed our feet and legs for us—ladies first, I suppose out of a sudden respect to the insane European fancies: such a luxury as you can scarce imagine. I felt a new man after it. But before we got to the King's house we were sadly muddied once more. It was 1 P.M. when we arrived, the canoe having beaten us by about five minutes, so we made fair time over our bog-holes.

But the war dances were over, and we came in time to see only the tail end (some two hours) of the food presentation. In Mataafa's house three chairs were set for us covered with fine mats. Of course, a native house without the blinds down is like a verandah. All the green in front was surrounded with sheds, some of flapping canvas, some of green palm boughs, where (in three sides

of a huge oblong) the natives sat by villages in a fine glow of many-hued array. There were folks in tapa, and folks in patchwork; there was every colour of the rainbow in a spot or a cluster; there were men with their heads gilded with powdered sandal-wood, others with heads all purple, stuck full of the petals of a flower. In the midst there was a growing field of outspread food, gradually covering acres; the gifts were brought in, now by chanting deputations, now by carriers in a file; they were brandished aloft and reclaimed over, with polite sacramental exaggerations, by the official receiver. He, a stalwart, well-oiled quadragenarian, shone with sweat from his exertions, brandishing cooked pigs. At intervals, from one of the squatted villages, an orator would arise. The field was almost beyond the reach of any human speaking voice; the proceedings besides continued in the midst; yet it was possible to catch snatches of this elaborate and cut-and-dry oratory—it was possible for me, for instance, to catch the description of my gift and myself as the *alii Tusitala, O le alii o malo tetele*—the chief Write Information, the chief of the great Governments. Gay designation? In the house, in our three curule chairs, we sat and looked on. On our left a little group of the family. In front of us, at our feet, an ancient Talking-man, crowned with green leaves, his profile almost exactly Dante's; Popo his name. He had worshipped idols in his youth; he had been full grown before the first missionary came hither from Tahiti; this makes him over eighty. Near by him sat his son and colleague. In the group on our left, his little grandchild sat with her legs crossed and her hands turned, the model already (at some three years old) of Samoan etiquette. Still further off to our right, Mataafa sat on the ground through all the business; and still I saw his lips moving, and the beads of his rosary slip stealthily through his hand. We had kava, and the King's drinking was hailed by the Popos (father and son) with a singular ululation, perfectly new to my ears; it means, to the

expert, " Long live Tuiatua " ; to the inexpert, is a mere voice of barbarous wolves. We had dinner, retired a bit behind the central pillar of the house ; and, when the King was done eating, the ululation was repeated. I had my eyes on Mataafa's face, and I saw pride and gratified ambition spring to life there and be instantly sucked in again. It was the first time, since the difference with Laupepa, that Popo and his son had openly joined him, and given him the due cry as Tuiatua—one of the eight royal names of the islands, as I hope you will know before this reaches you.

Not long after we had dined, the food-bringing was over. The gifts (carefully noted and tallied as they came in) were now announced by a humorous orator, who convulsed the audience, introducing singing notes, now on the name of the article, now on the number ; six thousand odd heads of taro, three hundred and nineteen cooked pigs ; and one thing that particularly caught me (by good luck), a single turtle " for the king "—*le tasi mo le tupu.* Then came one of the strangest sights I have yet witnessed. The two most important persons there (bar Mataafa) were Popo and his son. They rose, holding their long shod rods of talking men, passed forth from the house, broke into a strange dance, the father capering with outstretched arms and rod, the son crouching and gambolling beside him in a manner indescribable, and presently began to extend the circle of this dance among the acres of cooked food. *Whatever they leaped over, whatever they called for, became theirs.* To see mediæval Dante thus demean himself struck a kind of a chill of incongruity into our Philistine souls ; but even in a great part of the Samoan concourse, these antique and (I understand) quite local manners awoke laughter. One of my biscuit tins and a live calf were among the spoils he claimed, but the large majority of the cooked food (having once proved his dignity) he re-presented to the king.

Then came the turn of *le alii Tusitala.* He would not

dance, but he was given—five live hens, four gourds of oil, four fine tapas, a hundred heads of taro, two cooked pigs, a cooked shark, two or three cocoanut branches strung with kava, and the turtle, who soon after breathed his last, I believe, from sunstroke. It was a royal present for "the chief of the great powers." I should say the gifts were, on the proper signal, dragged out of the field of food by a troop of young men, all with their lava-lavas kilted almost into a loin-cloth. The art is to swoop on the food-field, pick up with unerring swiftness the right things and quantities, swoop forth again on the open, and separate, leaving the gifts in a new pile: so you may see a covey of birds in a corn-field. This reminds me of a very inhumane but beautiful passage I had forgotten in its place. The gift-giving was still in full swing, when there came a troop of some ninety men all in tapa lava-lavas of a purplish colour; they paused, and of a sudden there went up from them high into the air a flight of live chickens, which, as they came down again, were sent again into the air, for perhaps a minute, from the midst of a singular turmoil of flying arms and shouting voices; I assure you, it was very beautiful to see, but how many chickens were killed?

No sooner was my food set out than I was to be going. I had a little serious talk with Mataafa on the floor, and we went down to the boat, where we got our food aboard, such a cargo—like the Swiss Family Robinson, we said. However, a squall began, Tauilo refused to let us go, and we came back to the house for half an hour or so, when my ladies distinguished themselves by walking through a Fono (council), my mother actually taking up a position between Mataafa and Popo! It was about five when we started—turtle, pigs, taro, etc., my mother, Belle, myself, Tauilo, a portly friend of hers with the voice of an angel, and a pronunciation so delicate and true that you could follow Samoan as she sang, and the two tired boys Frank and Jimmie, with the two bad oars and the two slippery

rowlocks to impel the whole. Salé Taylor took the canoe and a strong Samoan to paddle him. Presently after he went inshore, and passed us a little after, with his arms folded, and *two* strong Samoans impelling him Apia-ward. This was too much for Belle, who hailed, taunted him, and made him return to the boat with one of the Samoans, setting Jimmie instead in the canoe. Then began our torment, Salé and the Samoan took the oars, sat on the same thwart (where they could get no swing on the boat had they tried), and deliberately ladled at the lagoon. We lay enchanted. Night fell; there was a light visible on shore; it did not move. The two women sang, Belle joining them in the hymns she has learned at family worship. Then a squall came up; we sat a while in roaring midnight under rivers of rain, and, when it blew by, there was the light again, immovable. A second squall followed, one of the worst I was ever out in; we could scarce catch our breath in the cold, dashing deluge. When it went, we were so cold that the water in the bottom of the boat (which I was then baling) seemed like a warm footbath in comparison, and Belle and I, who were still barefoot, were quite restored by laving in it.

All this time I had kept my temper, and refrained as far as might be from any interference, for I saw (in our friend's mulish humour) he always contrived to twist it to our disadvantage. But now came the acute point. Young Frank now took an oar. He was a little fellow, near as frail as myself, and very short; if he weighed nine stone, it was the outside; but his blood was up. He took stroke, moved the big Samoan forward to bow, and set to work to pull him round in fine style. Instantly, a kind of race competition—almost race hatred—sprang up. We jeered the Samoan. Salé declared it was the trim of the boat; "if this lady was aft" (Tauilo's portly friend) "he would row round Frank." We insisted on her coming aft, and Frank still rowed round the Samoan. When the Samoan caught a crab (the thing was continual with

these wretched oars and rowlocks), *we* shouted and jeered; when Frank caught one, Salé and the Samoan jeered and yelled. But anyway the boat moved, and presently we got up with Mulinuu, where I finally lost my temper, when I found that Salé proposed to go ashore and make a visit—in fact, we all three did. It is not worth while going into, but I must give you one snatch of the subsequent conversation as we pulled round Apia bay. "This Samoan," said Salé, "received seven German bullets in the field of Fangalii." "I am delighted to hear it," said Belle. "His brother was killed there," pursued Salé; and Belle, prompt as an echo, "Then there are no more of the family? how delightful!" Salé was sufficiently surprised to change the subject; he began to praise Frank's rowing with insufferable condescension: "But it is after all not to be wondered at," said he, "because he has been for some time a sailor. My good man, is it three or five years that you have been to sea?" And Frank, in a defiant shout: "Two!" Whereupon, so high did the ill-feeling run, that we three clapped and applauded and shouted, so that the President (whose house we were then passing) doubtless started at the sounds. It was nine when we got to the hotel; at first no food was to be found, but we skirmished up some bread and cheese and beer and brandy; and (having changed our wet clothes for the rather less wet in our bags) supped on the verandah.

On Saturday, 28th, I was wakened about 6.30, long past my usual hour, by a benevolent passer-by. My turtle lay on the verandah at my door, and the man woke me to tell me it was dead, as it had been when we put it on board the day before. All morning I ran the gauntlet of men and women coming up to me: "Mr. Stevenson, your turtle is dead." I gave half of it to the hotel keeper, so that his cook should cut it up; and we got a damaged shell, and two splendid meals, beefsteak one day and soup the next. The horses came for us about 9.30. It was waterspouting; we were drenched before we got out of

the town; the road was a fine going Highland trout stream; it thundered deep and frequent, and my mother's horse would not better on a walk. At last she took pity on us, and very nobly proposed that Belle and I should ride ahead. We were mighty glad to do so, for we were cold. Presently, I said I should ride back for my mother, but it thundered again; Belle is afraid of thunder, and I decided to see her through the forest before I returned for my other hen—I may say, my other wet hen. About the middle of the wood, where it is roughest and steepest, we met three pack-horses with barrels of lime-juice. I piloted Belle past these—it is not very easy in such a road—and then passed them again myself, to pilot my mother. This effected, it began to thunder again, so I rode on hard after Belle. When I caught up with her, she was singing Samoan hymns to support her terrors! We were all back, changed, and at table by lunch time, 11 A.M. Nor have any of us been the worse for it sin-syne. That is pretty good for a woman of my mother's age and an invalid of my standing; above all, as Tauilo was laid up with a bad cold, probably increased by rage.

Friday, 3rd June.—On Wednesday the club could not be held, and I must ride down town and to and fro all afternoon delivering messages, then dined and rode up by the young moon. I had plenty news when I got back; there is great talk in town of my deportation: it is thought they have written home to Downing Street requesting my removal, which leaves me not much alarmed; what I do rather expect is that H. J. Moors and I may be haled up before the C. J. to stand a trial for *lèse*-majesty. Well, we'll try and live it through.

The rest of my history since Monday has been unadulterated *David Balfour*. In season and out of season, night and day, David and his innocent harem—let me be just, he never has more than the two—are on my mind. Think of David Balfour with a pair of fair ladies—very nice ones too—hanging round him. I really believe David

is as good a character as anybody has a right to ask for in a novel. I have finished drafting Chapter xx. to-day, and feel it all ready to froth when the spigot is turned.

O, I forgot—and do forget. What did I mean? A waft of cloud has fallen on my mind, and I will write no more.

Wednesday, I believe, 8th June.—Lots of David, and lots of David, and the devil any other news. Yesterday we were startled by great guns firing a salute, and to-day Whitmee (missionary) rode up to lunch, and we learned it was the *Curaçoa* come in, the ship (according to rumour) in which I was to be deported. I went down to meet my fate, and the captain is to dine with me Saturday, so I guess I am not going this voyage. Even with the particularity with which I write to you, how much of my life goes unexpressed; my troubles with a madman by the name of ——, a genuine living lunatic, I believe, and jolly dangerous; my troubles about poor ——, all these have dropped out; yet for moments they were very instant, and one of them is always present with me.

I have finished copying Chapter xxi. of David—"*solus cum sola;* we travel together." Chapter xxii., "*Solus cum sola;* we keep house together," is already drafted. To the end of xxi. makes more than 150 pages of my manuscript—damn this hair—and I only designed the book to run to about 200; but when you introduce the female sect, a book does run away with you. I am very curious to see what you will think of my two girls. My own opinion is quite clear; I am in love with both. I foresee a few pleasant years of spiritual flirtations. The creator (if I may name myself, for the sake of argument, by such a name) is essentially unfaithful. For the duration of the two chapters in which I dealt with Miss Grant, I totally forgot my heroine, and even—but this is a flat secret—tried to win away David. I think I must try some day to marry Miss Grant. I'm blest if I don't think I've got that hair out! which seems triumph enough; so I conclude.

Tuesday.—Your infinitesimal correspondence has reached me, and I have the honour to refer to it with scorn. It contains only one statement of conceivable interest, that your health is better; the rest is null, and so far as disquisitory unsound. I am all right, but David Balfour is ailing; this came from my visit to the man-of-war, where I had a cup of tea, and the most of that night walked the verandah with extraordinary convictions of guilt and ruin, many of which (but not all) proved to have fled with the day, taking David along with them; he R.I.P. in Chapter XXII.

On Saturday I went down to the town, and fetched up Captain Gibson to dinner; Sunday I was all day at Samoa, and had a pile of visitors. Yesterday got my mail, including your despicable sheet; was fooled with a visit from the high chief Asi, went down at 4 P.M. to my Samoan lesson from Whitmee—I think I shall learn from him, he does not fool me with cockshot rules that are demolished next day, but professes ignorance like a man; the truth is, the grammar has still to be expiscated—dined with Haggard, and got home about nine.

Wednesday.—The excellent Clarke up here almost all day yesterday, a man I esteem and like to the soles of his boots; I prefer him to any one in Samoa, and to most people in the world; a real good missionary, with the inestimable advantage of having grown up a layman. Pity they all can't get that! It recalls my old proposal, which delighted Lady Taylor so much, that every divinity student should be thirty years old at least before he was admitted. Boys switched out of college into a pulpit, what chance have they? That any should do well amazes me, and the most are just what was to be expected.

Saturday.—I must tell you of our feast. It was long promised to the boys, and came off yesterday in one of their new houses. My good Simelé arrived from Savaii that morning asking for political advice; then we had Tauilo; Elena's father, a talking man of Tauilo's family;

Talolo's cousin; and a boy of Simelé's family, who attended on his dignity; then Metu, the meat-man—you have never heard of him, but he is a great person in our household—brought a lady and a boy—and there was another infant—eight guests in all. And we sat down thirty strong. You should have seen our procession, going (about two o'clock), all in our best clothes, to the hall of feasting! All in our Sunday's best. The new house had been hurriedly finished; the rafters decorated with flowers; the floor spread, native style, with green leaves; we had given a big porker, twenty-five pounds of fresh beef, a tin of biscuit, cocoanuts, etc. Our places were all arranged with much care; the native ladies of the house facing our party; the sides filled up by the men; the guests, please observe: the two chief people, male and female, were placed with our family, the rest between S. and the native ladies. After the feast was over, we had kava, and the calling of the kava was a very elaborate affair, and I thought had like to have made Simelé very angry; he is really a considerable chief, but he and Tauilo were not called till after all our family, *and the guests*, I suppose the principle being that he was still regarded as one of the household. I forgot to say that our black boy did not turn up when the feast was ready. Off went the two cooks, found him, decorated him with huge red hibiscus flowers—he was in a very dirty undershirt—brought him back between them like a reluctant maid, and thrust him into a place between Faauma and Elena, where he was petted and ministered to. When his turn came in the kava drinking—and you may be sure, in their contemptuous, affectionate kindness for him, as for a good dog, it came rather earlier than it ought—he was cried under a new name. *Aleki* is what they make of his own name Arrick; but instead of {the cup of / "le ipu a} Aleki!" it was called "le ipu a *Vailima*," and it was explained that he had "taken his chief-name"! a jest at which the plantation still

laughs. Kava done, I made a little speech, Henry translating. If I had been well, I should have alluded to all, but I was scarce able to sit up; so only alluded to my guest of all this month, the Tongan, Tomas, and to Simelé, partly for the jest of making him translate compliments to himself. The talking man replied with many handsome compliments to me, in the usual flood of Samoan fluent neatness; and we left them to an afternoon of singing and dancing. Must stop now, as my right hand is very bad again. I am trying to write with my left.

Sunday.—About half-past eight last night, I had gone to my own room, Fanny and Lloyd were in Fanny's, every one else in bed, only two boys on the premises—the two little brown boys Mitaiele (Michael), age I suppose 11 or 12, and the new steward, a Wallis islander, speaking no English and about fifty words of Samoan, recently promoted from the bush work, and a most good, anxious, timid lad of 15 or 16—looks like 17 or 18, of course—they grow fast here. In comes Mitaiele to Lloyd, and told some rigmarole about Paatalise (the steward's name) wanting to go and see his family in the bush.—" But he has no family in the bush," said Lloyd. " No," said Mitaiele. They went to the boy's bed (they sleep in the walled-in compartment of the verandah, once my dressing-room) and called at once for me. He lay like one asleep, talking in drowsy tones but without excitement, and at times " cheeping " like a frightened mouse; he was quite cool to the touch, and his pulse not fast; his breathing seemed wholly ventral; the bust still, the belly moving strongly. Presently he got from his bed, and ran for the door, with his head down not three feet from the floor and his body all on a stretch forward, like a striking snake: I say " ran," but this strange movement was not swift. Lloyd and I mastered him and got him back in bed. Soon there was another and more desperate attempt to escape, in which Lloyd had his ring broken. Then we bound him

to the bed humanely with sheets, ropes, boards, and pillows. He lay there and sometimes talked, sometimes whispered, sometimes wept like an angry child; his principal word was "Faamolemole"—"Please"—and he kept telling us at intervals that his family were calling him. During this interval, by the special grace of God, my boys came home; we had already called in Arrick, the black boy; now we had that Hercules, Lafaele, and a man Savea, who comes from Paatalise's own island and can alone communicate with him freely. Lloyd went to bed, I took the first watch, and sat in my room reading, while Lafaele and Arrick watched the madman. Suddenly Arrick called me; I ran into the verandah; there was Paatalise free of all his bonds and Lafaele holding him. To tell what followed is impossible. We were five people at him—Lafaele and Savea, very strong men, Lloyd, I and Arrick, and the struggle lasted until 1 A.M. before we had him bound. One detail for a specimen: Lloyd and I had charge of one leg, we were both sitting on it and lo! we were both tossed into the air—I, I dare say, a couple of feet. At last we had him spread-eagled to the iron bedstead, by his wrists and ankles, with matted rope; a most inhumane business, but what could we do? it was all we could do to manage it even so. The strength of the paroxysms had been steadily increasing, and we trembled for the next. And now I come to pure Rider Haggard. Lafaele announced that the boy was very bad, and he would get "some medicine" which was a family secret of his own. Some leaves were brought mysteriously in; chewed, placed on the boy's eyes, dropped in his ears (see *Hamlet*) and stuck up his nostrils; as he did this, the weird doctor partly smothered the patient with his hand; and by about 2 A.M. he was in a deep sleep, and from that time he showed no symptom of dementia whatever. The medicine (says Lafaele) is principally used for the wholesale slaughter of families; he himself feared last night that his dose was fatal; only one other person, on this island, knows the secret; and

she, Lafaele darkly whispers, has abused it. This remarkable tree we must try to identify.

The man-of-war doctor came up to-day, gave us a strait-waistcoat, taught us to bandage, examined the boy and saw he was apparently well—he insisted on doing his work all morning, poor lad, and when he first came down kissed all the family at breakfast! The doctor was greatly excited, as may be supposed, about Lafaele's medicine.

Tuesday.—All yesterday writing my mail by the hand of Belle, to save my wrist. This is a great invention, to which I shall stick, if it can be managed. We had some alarm about Paatalise, but he slept well all night for a benediction. This lunatic asylum exercise has no attractions for any of us.

I don't know if I remembered to say how much pleased I was with *Across the Plains* in every way, inside and out, and you and me. The critics seem to taste it, too, as well as could be hoped, and I believe it will continue to bring me in a few shillings a year for a while. But such books pay only indirectly.

To understand the full horror of the mad scene, and how well my boys behaved, remember that they *believed P.'s ravings*, they *knew* that his dead family, thirty strong, crowded the front verandah and called on him to come to the other world. They *knew* that his dead brother had met him that afternoon in the bush and struck him on both temples. And remember! we are fighting the dead, and they had to go out again in the black night, which is the dead man's empire. Yet last evening, when I thought P. was going to repeat the performance, I sent down for Lafaele, who had leave of absence, and he and his wife came up about eight o'clock with a lighted brand. These are the things for which I have to forgive my old cattleman his manifold shortcomings; they are heroic—so are the shortcomings, to be sure.

It came over me the other day suddenly that this

diary of mine to you would make good pickings after I am dead, and a man could make some kind of a book out of it without much trouble. So, for God's sake, don't lose them, and they will prove a piece of provision for my "poor old family," as Simelé calls it.

About my coming to Europe, I get more and more doubtful, and rather incline to Ceylon again as place of meeting. I am so absurdly well here in the tropics, that it seems like affectation. Yet remember I have never once stood Sydney. Anyway, I shall have the money for it all ahead, before I think of such a thing.

We had a bowl of punch on your birthday, which my incredible mother somehow knew and remembered.

By the time you receive this, my Samoan book will I suppose be out and the worst known. If I am burned in effigy for it no more need be said; if on the other hand I get off cheap with the authorities, this is to say that, supposing a vacancy to occur, I would condescend to accept the office of H.B.M.'s consul with parts, pendicles and appurtenances. There is a very little work to do except some little entertaining, to which I am bound to say my family and in particular the amanuensis who now guides the pen look forward with delight; I with manly resignation. The real reasons for the step would be three: 1st, possibility of being able to do some good, or at least certainty of not being obliged to stand always looking on helplessly at what is bad: 2nd, larks for the family: 3rd, and perhaps not altogether least, a house in town and a boat and a boat's crew.[1]

But I find I have left out another reason: 4th, growing desire on the part of the old man virulent for anything in the nature of a salary—years seem to invest that idea with new beauty.

I sometimes sit and yearn for anything in the nature

[1] This about the consulship was only a passing notion on the part of R. L. S. No vacancy occurred, and in his correspondence he does not recur to the subject.

of an income that would come in—mine has all got to be gone and fished for with the immortal mind of man. What I want is the income that really comes in of itself while all you have to do is just to blossom and exist and sit on chairs. Think how beautiful it would be not to have to mind the critics, and not even the darkest of the crowd—Sidney Colvin. I should probably amuse myself with works that would make your hair curl, if you had any left.

R. L. S.

To T. W. Dover

Stevenson's correspondent in this case is an artisan, who had been struck by the truth of a remark in his essay on *Beggars* that it is only or mainly the poor who habitually give to the poor; and who wrote to ask whether it was from experience that Stevenson knew this.

Vailima Plantation, Upolu, Samoa,
June 20th, 1892.

SIR,—In reply to your very interesting letter, I cannot fairly say that I have ever been poor, or known what it was to want a meal. I have been reduced, however, to a very small sum of money, with no apparent prospect of increasing it; and at that time I reduced myself to practically one meal a day, with the most disgusting consequences to my health. At this time I lodged in the house of a working-man, and associated much with others. At the same time, from my youth up, I have always been a good deal and rather intimately thrown among the working-classes, partly as a civil engineer in out-of-the-way places, partly from a strong and, I hope, not ill-favoured sentiment of curiosity. But the place where, perhaps, I was most struck with the fact upon which you comment was the house of a friend, who was exceedingly poor, in fact, I may say destitute, and who lived in the attic of a very tall house entirely inhabited by persons in varying stages of poverty. As he was also in ill-health, I made a habit of passing my afternoon with him, and

when there it was my part to answer the door. The steady procession of people begging, and the expectant and confident manner in which they presented themselves, struck me more and more daily; and I could not but remember with surprise that though my father lived but a few streets away in a fine house, beggars scarce came to the door once a fortnight or a month. From that time forward I made it my business to inquire, and in the stories which I am very fond of hearing from all sorts and conditions of men, learned that in the time of their distress it was always from the poor they sought assistance, and almost always from the poor they got it.

Trusting I have now satisfactorily answered your question, which I thank you for asking, I remain, with sincere compliments, ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

To E. L. BURLINGAME

Vailima, Summer 1892.

MY DEAR BURLINGAME,—First of all, *you have all the corrections on The Wrecker.* I found I had made what I meant and forgotten it, and was so careless as not to tell you.

Second, of course, and by all means, charge corrections on the Samoa book to me; but there are not near so many as I feared. The Lord hath dealt bountifully with me, and I believe all my advisers were amazed to see how nearly correct I had got the truck, at least I was. With this you will receive the whole revise and a typewritten copy of the last chapter. And the thing now is Speed, to catch a possible revision of the treaty. I believe Cassells are to bring it out, but Baxter knows, and the thing has to be crammed through *prestissimo, à la chasseur.*

You mention the belated Barbeys; what about the equally belated Pineros? And I hope you will keep your bookshop alive to supplying me continuously with the

Saga Library. I cannot get enough of *Sagas;* I wish there were nine thousand; talk about realism!

All seems to flourish with you; I also prosper; none the less for being quit of that abhorred task, Samoa. I could give a supper party here were there any one to sup. Never was such a disagreeable task, but the thing had to be told. . . .

There, I trust I am done with this cursed chapter of my career, bar the rotten eggs and broken bottles that may follow, of course. Pray remember, speed is now all that can be asked, hoped, or wished. I give up all hope of proofs, revises, proof of the map, or sic like; and you on your side will try to get it out as reasonably seemly as may be.

Whole Samoa book herewith. Glory be to God.—Yours very sincerely, ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

TO SIDNEY COLVIN

The following consists of scraps merely, taken from a letter almost entirely occupied with private family affairs.

[*Vailima*] *Saturday, 2nd July* 1892.

THE character of my handwriting is explained, alas! by scrivener's cramp. This also explains how long I have let the paper lie plain.

1 P.M.—I was busy copying *David Balfour* with my left hand—a most laborious task—Fanny was down at the native house superintending the floor, Lloyd down in Apia, and Belle in her own house cleaning, when I heard the latter calling on my name. I ran out on the verandah; and there on the lawn beheld my crazy boy with an axe in his hand and dressed out in green ferns, dancing. I ran downstairs and found all my house boys on the back verandah, watching him through the dining-room. I asked what it meant?—"Dance belong his place," they said.—

"I think this no time to dance," said I. "Has he done his work?"—"No," they told me, "away bush all morning." But there they all stayed on the back verandah. I went on alone through the dining-room, and bade him stop. He did so, shouldered the axe, and began to walk away; but I called him back, walked up to him, and took the axe out of his unresisting hands. The boy is in all things so good, that I can scarce say I was afraid; only I felt it had to be stopped ere he could work himself up by dancing to some craziness. Our house boys protested they were not afraid; all I know is they were all watching him round the back door and did not follow me till I had the axe. As for the out boys, who were working with Fanny in the native house, they thought it a very bad business, and made no secret of their fears.

Wednesday, 6th.—I have no account to give of my stewardship these days, and there's a day more to account for than mere arithmetic would tell you. For we have had two Monday Fourths, to bring us at last on the right side of the meridian, having hitherto been an exception in the world and kept our private date. Business has filled my hours sans intermission.

Tuesday, 12th.—I am doing no work and my mind is in abeyance. Fanny and Belle are sewing-machining in the next room; I have been pulling down their hair, and Fanny has been kicking me, and now I am driven out. Austin I have been chasing about the verandah; now he has gone to his lessons, and I make believe to write to you in despair. But there is nothing in my mind; I swim in mere vacancy, my head is like a rotten nut; I shall soon have to begin to work again or I shall carry away some part of the machinery. I have got your insufficient letter, for which I scorn to thank you. I have had no review by Gosse, none by Birrell; another time, if I have a letter in the Times, you might send me the text as well; also please send me a cricket bat and a

cake, and when I come home for the holidays, I should like to have a pony.—I am, sir, your obedient servant,

JACOB TONSON.

P.S.—I am quite well; I hope you are quite well. The world is too much with us, and my mother bids me bind my hair and lace my bodice blue.

TO CHARLES BAXTER

Vailima Plantation, Upolu,
Samoan Islands, 18th July 1892.

MY DEAR CHARLES,—. . . I have been now for some time contending with powers and principalities, and I have never once seen one of my own letters to the Times. So when you see something in the papers that you think might interest the exiles of Upolu, do not think twice, out with your saxpence, and send it flying to Vailima. Of what you say of the past, eh, man, it was a queer time, and awful miserable, but there's no sense in denying it was awful fun. Do you mind the youth in highland garb and the tableful of coppers? Do you mind the SIGNAL of Waterloo Place?—Hey, how the blood stands to the heart at such a memory!—Hae ye the notes o't? Gie's them.—Gude's sake, man, gie's the notes o't; I mind ye made a tüne o't an' played it on your pinanny; gie's the notes. Dear Lord, that past.

Glad to hear Henley's prospects are fair: his new volume is the work of a real poet. He is one of those who can make a noise of his own with words, and in whom experience strikes an individual note. There is perhaps no more genuine poet living, bar the Big Guns. In case I cannot overtake an acknowledgment to himself by this mail, please let him hear of my pleasure and admiration. How poorly Kipling compares! He is all smart journalism and cleverness: it is all bright and shallow and limpid, like a business paper—a good one, *s'entend;* but there is

no blot of heart's blood and the Old Night: there are no harmonics, there is scarce harmony to his music; and in Henley—all of these; a touch, a sense within sense, a sound outside the sound, the shadow of the inscrutable, eloquent beyond all definition. The First London Voluntary knocked me wholly.—Ever yours affectionately, my dear Charles, ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

Kind memories to your father and all friends.

To W. E. HENLEY

Vailima Plantation, Upolu, Samoa,
August 1st, 1892.

MY DEAR HENLEY,—It is impossible to let your new volume pass in silence. I have not received the same thrill of poetry since G. M.'s *Joy of Earth* volume and *Love in a Valley;* and I do not know that even that was so intimate and deep. Again and again, I take the book down, and read, and my blood is fired as it used to be in youth. *Andante con moto* in the *Voluntaries,* and the thing about the trees at night (No. XXIV. I think) are up to date my favourites. I did not guess you were so great a magician; these are new tunes, this is an undertone of the true Apollo; these are not verse, they are poetry —inventions, creations, in language. I thank you for the joy you have given me, and remain your old friend and present huge admirer, ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

The hand is really the hand of Esau, but under a course of threatened scrivener's cramp.

For the next edition of the Book of Verses, pray accept an emendation. Last three lines of Echoes No. XLIV. read—

> "But life in act? How should the grave
> Be victor over these,
> Mother, a mother of men?"

The two vocatives scatter the effect of this inimitable

close. If you insist on the longer line, equip "grave" with an epithet. R. L. S.

To E. L. Burlingame

Accompanying the MS. of the article giving extracts from the record kept by Robert Stevenson the elder of the trip on which Sir Walter Scott sailed in his company on board the Northern Lights yacht: printed in Scribner's Magazine, 1893.

Vailima, Upolu, August 1st, '92.

MY DEAR BURLINGAME,—Herewith *My Grandfather*. I have had rather a bad time suppressing the old gentleman, who was really in a very garrulous stage; as for getting him *in order*, I could do but little towards that; however, there are one or two points of interest which may justify us in printing. The swinging of his stick and not knowing the sailor of Coruiskin, in particular, and the account of how he wrote the lives in the Bell Book particularly please me. I hope my own little introduction is not egoistic; or rather I do not care if it is. It was that old gentleman's blood that brought me to Samoa.

By the by, vols. vii., viii., and ix. of Adams's *History* have never come to hand; no more have the dictionaries.

Please send me *Stonehenge on the Horse, Stories and Interludes* by Barry Pain, and *Edinburgh Sketches and Memoirs* by David Masson. *The Wrecker* has turned up. So far as I have seen, it is very satisfactory, but on pp. 548, 549, there has been a devil of a miscarriage. The two Latin quotations instead of following each other being separated (doubtless for printing considerations) by a line of prose. My compliments to the printers; there is doubtless such a thing as good printing, but there is such a thing as good sense.

The sequel to *Kidnapped, David Balfour* by name, is about three-quarters done and gone to press for serial publication. By what I can find out it ought to be through hand with that and ready for volume form early next spring.—Yours very sincerely, R. L. S.

To Andrew Lang

Mr. Andrew Lang had been supplying Stevenson with some books and historical references for his proposed novel *The Young Chevalier.*

[*Vailima, August* 1892.]

MY DEAR LANG,—I knew you would prove a trusty purveyor. The books you have sent are admirable. I got the name of my hero out of Brown—Blair of Balmyle—Francie Blair. But whether to call the story *Blair of Balmyle*, or whether to call it *The Young Chevalier*, I have not yet decided. The admirable Cameronian tract—perhaps you will think this a cheat—is to be boned into *David Balfour*, where it will fit better, and really furnishes me with a desired foothold over a boggy place.

Later ; no, it won't go in, and I fear I must give up "the idolatrous occupant upon the throne," a phrase that overjoyed me beyond expression. I am in a deuce of a flutter with politics, which I hate, and in which I certainly do not shine ; but a fellow cannot stand aside and look on at such an exhibition as our government. 'Tain't decent ; no gent can hold a candle to it. But it's a grind to be interrupted by midnight messengers and pass your days writing proclamations (which are never proclaimed) and petitions (which ain't petited) and letters to the Times, which it makes my jaw yawn to re-read, and all your time have your heart with David Balfour ; he has just left Glasgow this morning for Edinburgh, James More has escaped from the castle ; it is far more real to me than the Behring Sea or the Baring brothers either—he got the news of James More's escape from the Lord Advocate, and started off straight to comfort Catriona. You don't know her ; she's James More's daughter, and a respectable young wumman ; the Miss Grants think so —the Lord Advocate's daughters—so there can't be anything really wrong. Pretty soon we all go to Holland, and be hanged ; thence to Dunkirk, and be damned ;

and the tale concludes in Paris, and be Poll-parrotted. This is the last authentic news. You are not a real hard-working novelist; not a practical novelist; so you don't know the temptation to let your characters maunder. Dumas did it, and lived. But it is not war; it ain't sportsmanlike, and I have to be stopping their chatter all the time. Brown's appendix is great reading.

My only grief is that I can't
Use the idolatrous occupant.

Yours ever, R. L. S.

Blessing and praising you for a useful (though idolatrous) occupant of Kensington.

To Miss Adelaide Boodle

Samoa and the Samoans for children, continued after an eight months' pause.

Vailima Plantation, Samoan Islands,
August 14th, 1892.

MY DEAR MISS BOODLE,—The lean man is exceedingly ashamed of himself, and offers his apologies to the little girls in the cellar just above. If they will be so good as to knock three times upon the floor, he will hear it on the other side of his floor, and will understand that he is forgiven. I believe I got you and the children—or rather left you and the children—still on the road to the lean man's house. When you get up there a great part of the forest has been cleared away. It comes back again pretty quick, though not quite so high; but everywhere, except where the weeders have been kept busy, young trees have sprouted up, and the cattle and the horses cannot be seen as they feed. In this clearing there are two or three houses scattered about, and between the two biggest I think the little girls in the cellar would first notice a sort

of thing like a gridiron on legs made of logs and wood. Sometimes it has a flag flying on it made of rags of old clothes. It is a fort (so I am told) built by the person here who would be much the most interesting to the girls in the cellar. This is a young gentleman of eleven years of age answering to the name of Austin. It was after reading a book about the Red Indians that he thought it more prudent to create this place of strength. As the Red Indians are in North America, and this fort seems to me a very useless kind of building, I am anxious to hope that the two may never be brought together. When Austin is not engaged in building forts, nor on his lessons, which are just as annoying to him as other children's lessons are to them, he walks sometimes in the bush, and if anybody is with him, talks all the time. When he is alone I don't think he says anything, and I dare say he feels very lonely and frightened, just as the lean man does, at the queer noises and the endless lines of the trees. He finds the strangest kinds of seeds, some of them bright coloured like lollipops, or really like precious stones; some of them in odd cases like tobacco-pouches. He finds and collects all kinds of little shells with which the whole ground is scattered, and which, though they are the shells of land animals like our snails, are nearly of as many shapes and colours as the shells on our sea-beaches. In the streams that come running down out of the mountains, and which are all as clear and bright as mirror glass, he sees eels and little bright fish that sometimes jump together out of the surface of the brook in a little knot of silver, and fresh-water prawns which lie close under the stones, and can be seen looking up at him with eyes of the colour of a jewel. He sees all kinds of beautiful birds, some of them blue and white, some of them blue and white and red, and some of them coloured like our pigeons at home, and these last the little girls in the cellar may like to know live almost entirely on nutmegs as they fall ripe off the trees. Another little bird he may sometimes see, as the lean man

saw him only this morning, a little fellow not so big as a man's hand, exquisitely neat, of a pretty bronze black like ladies' shoes, and who sticks up behind him (much as a peacock does) his little tail shaped and fluted like a scallop shell.

Here are a lot of curious and interesting things that Austin sees round him every day; and when I was a child at home in the old country I used to play and pretend to myself that I saw things of the same kind. That the rooms were full of orange and nutmeg trees, and the cold town gardens outside the windows were alive with parrots and with lions. What do the little girls in the cellar think that Austin does? He makes believe just the other way: he pretends that the strange great trees with their broad leaves and slab-sided roots are European oaks; and the places on the road up (where you and I and the little girls in the cellar have already gone) he calls by old-fashioned, far-away European names, just as if you were to call the cellar stair and the corner of the next street—if you could only manage to pronounce the names—Upolu and Savaii. And so it is with all of us, with Austin and the lean man and the little girls in the cellar; wherever we are it is but a stage on the way to somewhere else, and whatever we do, however well we do it, it is only a preparation to do something else that shall be different.

But you must not suppose that Austin does nothing but build forts and walk among the woods and swim in the rivers. On the contrary, he is sometimes a very busy and useful fellow; and I think the little girls in the cellar would have admired him very nearly as much as he admired himself if they had seen him setting off on horseback with his hand on his hip and his pockets full of letters and orders, at the head of quite a procession of huge white cart-horses with pack-saddles, and big brown native men with nothing on but gaudy kilts. Mighty well he managed all his commissions; and those who saw

him ordering and eating his single-handed luncheon in the queer little Chinese restaurant on the beach declare he looked as if the place, and the town, and the whole archipelago belonged to him. But I am not going to let you suppose that this great gentleman at the head of all his horses and his men, like the King of France in the old rhyme, would be thought much of a dandy on the streets of London. On the contrary, if he could be seen there with his dirty white cap, and his faded purple shirt, and his little brown breeks that do not reach his knees, and the bare shanks below, and the bare feet stuck in the stirrup leathers, for he is not quite long enough to reach the irons, I am afraid the little boys and girls in your part of the town might feel very much inclined to give him a penny in charity. So you see that a very, very big man in one place might seem very small potatoes in another, just as the king's palace here (of which I told you in my last) would be thought rather a poor place of residence by a Surrey gipsy. And if you come to that, even the lean man himself, who is no end of an important person, if he were picked up from the chair where he is now sitting, and slung down, feet foremost, in the neighbourhood of Charing Cross, would probably have to escape into the nearest shop, or take the consequences of being mobbed. And the ladies of his family, who are very pretty ladies, and think themselves uncommonly well-dressed for Samoa, would (if the same thing were done to them) be extremely glad to get into a cab.

I write to you by the hands of another, because I am threatened again with scrivener's cramp. My health is beyond reproach; I wish I could say as much for my wife's, which is far from the thing. Give us some news of yours, and even when none of us write, do not suppose for a moment that we are forgetful of our old gamekeeper. Our prettiest walk, an alley of really beautiful green sward which leads through Fanny's garden to the river and the bridge and the beginning of the high woods on

the mountain-side, where the Tapu a fafine (or spirit of the land) has her dwelling, and the work-boys fear to go alone, is called by a name that I think our gamekeeper has heard before—Adelaide Road.

With much love from all of us to yourself, and all good wishes for your future, and the future of the children in the cellar, believe me your affectionate friend,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

TO SIDNEY COLVIN

Vailima [*August* 1892].

MY DEAR COLVIN,—You will have no letter at all this month and it is really not my fault. I have been saving my hand as much as possible for Davy Balfour; only this morning I was getting on first rate with him, when about half-past nine there came a prick in the middle of the ball of my thumb, and I had to take to the left hand and two words a minute. I fear I slightly exaggerate the speed of my left hand; about a word and a half in the minute—which is dispiriting to the last degree. Your last letter with the four excellent reviews and the good news about *The Wrecker* was particularly welcome. I have already written to Charles Baxter about the volume form appearance of *The Beach of Falesá*. In spite of bad thumbs and other interruptions I hope to send to Baxter by this mail the whole first part (a good deal more than half) of David Balfour ready for press. This is pretty satisfactory, and I think ought to put us beyond the reach of financial catastrophe for the year.

A cousin of mine, Graham Balfour, arrived along with your last. It was rather a lark. Fanny, Belle and I stayed down at the hotel two nights expecting the steamer, and we had seven horses down daily for the party and the baggage. These were on one occasion bossed by Austin, age eleven. "I'm afraid I cannot do that now," said he

in answer to some communication, "as I am taking charge of the men here." In the course of the forenoon he took "his" men to get their lunch, and had his own by himself at the Chinese restaurant. What a day for a boy. The steamer came in at last on Saturday morning after breakfast. We three were out at the place of anchorage in the hotel boat as she came up, spotting rather anxiously for our guest, whom none of us had ever seen. We chose out some rather awful cads and tried to make up our mind to them; they were the least offensive yet observed among an awful crew of cabin passengers; but when the Simon Pure appeared at last upon the scene he was as nice a young fellow as you would want. Followed a time of giddy glory—one crowded hour of glorious life—when I figured about the deck with attendant shemales in the character of *the* local celebrity, was introduced to the least unpresentable of the ruffians on board, dogged about the deck by a diminutive Hebrew with a Kodak, the click of which kept time to my progress like a pair of castanets, and filled up in the Captain's room on iced champagne at 8.30 of God's morning. The Captain in question, Cap. Morse, is a great South Sea character, like the side of a house and the green-room of a music-hall, but with all the saving qualities of the seaman. The celebrity was a great success with this untutored observer. He was kind enough to announce that he expected (rather with awe) a much more "thoughtful" person; and I think I pleased him much with my parting salutation, "Well, Captain, I suppose you and I are the two most notorious men in the Pacific." I think it will enable you to see the Captain if I tell you that he recited to us in cold blood the *words* of a new comic song; doubtless a tribute to my literary character. I had often heard of Captain Morse and always had detested all that I was told, and detested the man in confidence, just as you are doing; but really he has a wonderful charm of strength, loyalty, and simplicity. The whole celebrity business was

particularly characteristic; the Captain has certainly never read a word of mine; and as for the Jew with the Kodak, he had never heard of me till he came on board. There was a third admirer who sent messages in to the Captain's cabin asking if the Lion would accept a gift of Webster's *Unabridged*. I went out to him and signified a manly willingness to accept a gift of anything. He stood and bowed before me, his eyes danced with excitement. "Mr. Stevenson," he said and his voice trembled, "your name is very well known to me. I have been in the publishing line in Canada and I have handled many of your works for the trade." "Come," I said, "here's genuine appreciation."

From this gaudy scene we descended into the hotel boat with our new second cousin, got to horse and returned to Vailima, passing shot of Kodak once more on the Nulivae bridge, where the little Jew was posted with his little Jew wife, each about three feet six in stature and as vulgar as a lodging house clock.

We were just writing this when another passenger from the ship arrived up here at Vailima. This is a nice quiet simple blue-eyed little boy of Pennsylvania Quaker folk. Threatened with consumption of my sort, he has been sent here by his doctor on the strength of my case. I am sure if the case be really parallel he could not have been better done by. As we had a roast pig for dinner we kept him for that meal; and the rain coming on just when the moon should have risen kept him again for the night. So you see it is now to-morrow.

Graham Balfour the new cousin and Lloyd are away with Clark the Missionary on a school inspecting *malaga*, really perhaps the prettiest little bit of opera in real life that can be seen, and made all the prettier by the actors being children. I have come to a collapse this morning on D.B.: wrote a chapter one way, half re-copied it in another, and now stand halting between the two like Buridan's donkey. These sorts of cruces always are to

me the most insoluble, and I should not wonder if D.B. stuck there for a week or two. This is a bother, for I understand McClure talks of beginning serial publication in December. If this could be managed, what with D.B., the apparent success of *The Wrecker*, *Falesá*, and some little pickings from *Across the Plains*—not to mention, as quite hopeless, *The History of Samoa*—this should be rather a profitable year, as it must be owned it has been rather a busy one. The trouble is, if I miss the December publication, it may take the devil and all of a time to start another syndicate. I am really tempted to curse my conscientiousness. If I hadn't recopied Davie he would now be done and dead and buried; and here I am stuck about the middle, with an immediate publication threatened and the fear before me of having after all to scamp the essential business of the end. At the same time, though I love my Davy, I am a little anxious to get on again on *The Young Chevalier*. I have in nearly all my works been trying one racket: to get out the facts of life as clean and naked and sharp as I could manage it. In this other book I want to try and megilp them together in an atmosphere of sentiment, and I wonder whether twenty-five years of life spent in trying this one thing will not make it impossible for me to succeed in the other. However it is the only way to attempt a love story. You can't tell any of the facts, and the only chance is to paint an atmosphere.

It is a very warm morning—the parrot is asleep on the door (she heard her name, and immediately awakened) —and my brains are completely addled by having come to grief over Davy.

Hurray! a subject discovered! The parrot is a little white cockatoo of the small variety. It belongs to Belle, whom it guards like a watch dog. It chanced that when she was sick some months ago I came over and administered some medicine. Unnecessary to say Belle bleated, whereupon the parrot bounded upon me and buried his

neb in my backside. From that day on the little wretch attacked me on every possible occasion, usually from the rear, though she would also follow me along the verandah and as I went downstairs attack my face. This was far from funny. I am a person of average courage, but I don't think I was ever more cordially afraid of anything than of this miserable atomy, and the deuce of it was that I could not but admire her appalling courage and there was no means of punishing such a thread-paper creature without destroying it entirely. Act II. On Graham's arrival I gave him my room and came out to Lloyd's in the lower floor of Belle's—I beg your pardon —the *parrot's*—house. The first morning I was to wake Belle early so that breakfast should be seen to for our guest. It was a mighty pretty dawn, the birds were singing extraordinary strong, all was peace, and there was the damned parrot hanging to the knob of Belle's door. Courage, my heart! On I went and Cockie buried her bill in the joint of my thumb. I believe that Job would have killed that bird; but I was more happily inspired—I caught it up and flung it over the verandah as far as I could throw. I must say it was violently done, and I looked with some anxiety to see in what state of preservation it would alight. Down it came however on its two feet, uttered a few oaths in a very modified tone of voice, and set forth on the return journey to its mansion. Its wings being cut and its gait in walking having been a circumstance apparently not thoroughly calculated by its maker, it took about twenty-five minutes to get home again. Now here is this remarkable point—that bird has never bitten me since. When I have early breakfast she and the cat come down and join me, and she sits on the back of my chair. When I am at work with the door shut she sits outside and demolishes the door with that same beak which was so recently reddened with my heart's blood—and in the evening she does her business all over my clothes in the most friendly manner

in the world. I ought to add a word about the parrot and the cat. Three cats were brought by Belle from Sydney. This one alone remains faithful and domestic. One of the funniest things I have ever seen was Polly and Maud over a piece of bacon. Polly stood on one leg, held the bacon in the other, regarded Maudie with a secret and sinister look and very slowly and quietly—far too quietly for the word I have to use—gnashed her bill at her. Maudie came up quite close; there she stuck—she was afraid to come nearer, to go away she was ashamed; and she assisted at the final and very deliberate consumption of the bacon, making about as poor a figure as a cat can make.

Next day.—Date totally unknown, or rather it is now known but is reserved because it would certainly prove inconsistent with dates previously given. I went down about two o'clock in company with a couple of chance visitors to Apia. It was smoking hot, not a sign of any wind and the sun scorching your face. I found the great Haggard in hourly expectation of Lady Jersey, surrounded by crowds of very indifferent assistants, and I must honestly say—the only time I ever saw him so—cross. He directed my attention to all the new paint, his own handiwork he said, and made me visit the bathroom which he has just fixed up. I think I never saw a man more miserable and happy at the same time. Had some hock and a seltzer, went down town, met Fanny and Belle, and so home in time for a magnificent dinner of prawns and an eel cooked in oil, both from our own river.

This morning the overseer—the new overseer Mr. Austin Strong—went down in charge of the pack-horses and a squad of men, himself riding a white horse with extreme dignity and what seemed to onlookers a perhaps somewhat theatrical air of command. He returned triumphantly, all his commissions apparently executed with success, bringing us a mail—not your mail, Colonial ways

—and the news of Lady Jersey's arrival and reception among flying flags and banging guns.

As soon as I had concluded my flattering description of Polly she bit one of my toes to the blood. But put not your trust in shemales, though to say the truth she looks more like a Russian colonel.

Aug. 15th.—On the Saturday night Fanny and I went down to Haggard's to dine and be introduced to Lady Jersey. She is there with her daughter Lady Margaret and her brother Captain Leigh, a very nice kind of glass-in-his-eye kind of fellow. It is to be presumed I made a good impression; for the meeting has had a most extraordinary sequel. Fanny and I slept in Haggard's billiard room, which happens to be Lloyd's bungalow. In the morning she and I breakfasted in the back parts with Haggard and Captain Leigh, and it was then arranged that the Captain should go with us to Malie on the Tuesday under a false name; so that Government House at Sydney might by no possibility be connected with a rebel camp. On Sunday afternoon up comes Haggard in a state of huge excitement: Lady J. insists on going too, in the character of my cousin; I write her a letter under the name of Miss Amelia Balfour, proposing the excursion; and this morning up comes a copy of verses from Amelia. I wrote to Mataafa announcing that I should bring two cousins instead of one, that the second was a lady, unused to Samoan manners, and it would be a good thing if she could sleep in another house with Ralala. Sent a copy of this to Amelia, and at the same time made all arrangements, dating my letter 1745. We shall go on ahead on the Malie Road; she is to follow with Haggard and Captain Leigh, and overtake us at the ford of the Gasi-gasi, whence Haggard will return and the rest of us pursue our way to the rebeldom.

This lark is certainly huge. It is all nonsense that it can be concealed; Miss Amelia Balfour will be at once identified with the Queen of Sydney, as they call her;

and I would not in the least wonder if the visit proved the signal of war. With this I have no concern, and the thing wholly suits my book and fits my predilections for Samoa. What a pity the mail leaves, and I must leave this adventure to be continued in our next! But I need scarcely say that all this is deadly private—I expect it all to come out, not without explosion; only it must not be through me or you. We had a visit yesterday from a person by the name of Count Nerli, who is said to be a good painter. Altogether the aristocracy clusters thick about us. In which radiant light, as the mail must now be really put up, I leave myself until next month,—Yours ever,

R. L. S.

To the Countess of Jersey

Following up the last letter, Stevenson here tells the story of the visit paid to Apia by the Countess of Jersey, who had come over from Sydney with her brother Captain Leigh and her young daughter Lady Margaret Villiers. "A warm friendship," writes Lady Jersey, "was the immediate result; we constantly met, either in the hospitable abode of our host Mr. Bazett Haggard, or in Mr. Stevenson's delightful mountain home, and passed many happy hours in riding, walking, and conversation." The previous letter has shown how it was arranged that the party should pay a visit of curiosity to the "rebel king," or more properly the rival claimant to the kingly power, Mataafa, in his camp at Malie, and how Stevenson at once treated the adventure as a chapter out of a Waverley novel. "The wife of the new Governor of New South Wales," writes Lady Jersey on her part, "could not pay such a visit in her own name, so Mr. Stevenson adopted me as his cousin, 'Amelia Balfour.' This transparent disguise was congenial to his romantic instincts, and he writes concerning the arrangements made for the expedition, carefully dating his letter 'Aug. 14, 1745.'"

August 14, 1745.

To Miss Amelia Balfour—my dear cousin,—We are going an expedition to leeward on Tuesday morning. If a lady were perhaps to be encountered on horseback —say, towards the Gasi-gasi river—about six A.M., I think we should have an episode somewhat after the

style of the '45. What a misfortune, my dear cousin, that you should have arrived while your cousin Graham was occupying my only guest-chamber—for Osterley Park is not so large in Samoa as it was at home—but happily our friend Haggard has found a corner for you!

The King over the Water—the Gasi-gasi water—will be pleased to see the clan of Balfour mustering so thick around his standard.

I have (one serious word) been so lucky as to get a really secret interpreter, so all is for the best in our little adventure into the Waverley Novels.—I am, your affectionate cousin, ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

Observe the stealth with which I have blotted my signature, but we must be political *à outrance*.

TO THE COUNTESS OF JERSEY

MY DEAR COUSIN,—I send for your information a copy of my last letter to the gentleman in question. 'Tis thought more wise, in consideration of the difficulty and peril of the enterprise, that we should leave the town in the afternoon, and by several detachments. If you would start for a ride with the Master of Haggard and Captain Lockhart of Lee, say at three o'clock of the afternoon, you would make some rencounters by the wayside which might be agreeable to your political opinions. All present will be staunch.

The Master of Haggard might extend his ride a little, and return through the marsh and by the nuns' house (I trust that has the proper flavour), so as a little to diminish the effect of separation.—I remain your affectionate cousin to command, O TUSITALA.

P.S.—It is to be thought this present year of grace will be historical.

To Sidney Colvin

This letter tells without preface the story of the expedition planned in the preceding.

[*Vailima, August* 1892.]

MY DEAR COLVIN,—This is Friday night, the (I believe) 18th or 20th August or September. I shall probably regret to-morrow having written you with my own hand like the Apostle Paul. But I am alone over here in the workman's house, where I and Belle and Lloyd and Austin are pigging; the rest are at cards in the main residence. I have not joined them because "belly belong me" has been kicking up, and I have just taken 15 drops of laudanum.

On Tuesday, the party set out—self in white cap, velvet coat, cords and yellow half boots, Belle in a white kind of suit and white cap to match mine, Lloyd in white clothes and long yellow boots and a straw hat, Graham in khakis and gaiters, Henry (my old overseer) in blue coat and black kilt, and the great Lafaele with a big ship-bag on his saddle-bow. We left the mail at the P.O., had lunch at the hotel, and about 1.50 set out westward to the place of tryst. This was by a little shrunken brook in a deep channel of mud, on the far side of which, in a thicket of low trees, all full of moths of shadow and butterflies of sun, we lay down to await her ladyship. Whisky and water, then a sketch of the encampment for which we all posed to Belle, passed off the time until 3.30. Then I could hold on no longer. 30 minutes late. Had the secret oozed out? Were they arrested? I got my horse, crossed the brook again, and rode hard back to the Vaea cross roads, whence I was aware of white clothes glancing in the other long straight radius of the quadrant. I turned at once to return to the place of tryst; but D. overtook me, and almost bore me down, shouting "Ride, ride!" like a hero in a ballad. Lady Margaret and he were only come to shew the place; they returned, and the rest of

our party, reinforced by Captain Leigh and Lady Jersey, set on for Malie. The delay was due to D.'s infinite precautions, leading them up lanes, by back ways, and then down again to the beach road a hundred yards further on.

It was agreed that Lady Jersey existed no more; she was now my cousin Amelia Balfour. That relative and I headed the march; she is a charming woman, all of us like her extremely after trial on this somewhat rude and absurd excursion. And we Amelia'd or Miss Balfour'd her with great but intermittent fidelity. When we came to the last village, I sent Henry on ahead to warn the King of our approach and amend his discretion, if that might be. As he left I heard the villagers asking *which was the great lady?* And a little further, at the borders of Malie itself, we found the guard making a music of bugles and conches. Then I knew the game was up and the secret out. A considerable guard of honour, mostly children, accompanied us; but, for our good fortune, we had been looked for earlier, and the crowd was gone.

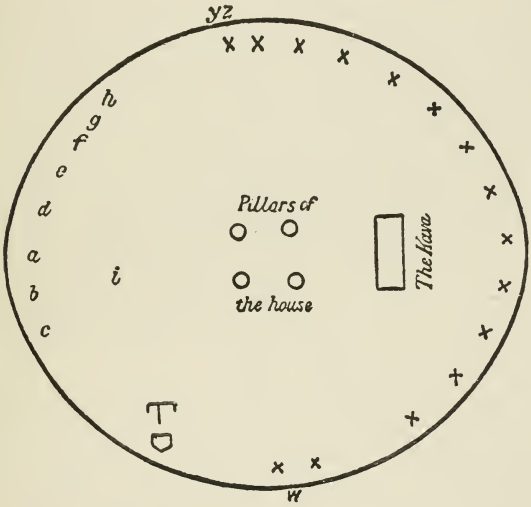
Dinner at the king's; he asked me to say grace, I could think of none—never could; Graham suggested *Benedictus Benedicat*, at which I leaped. We were nearly done, when old Popo inflicted the Atua howl (of which you have heard already) right at Lady Jersey's shoulder. She started in fine style.—"There," I said, "we have been giving you a chapter of Scott, but this goes beyond the Waverley Novels." After dinner, kava. Lady J. was served before me, and the king *drank last;* it was the least formal kava I ever saw in that house,—no names called, no show of ceremony. All my ladies are well trained, and when Belle drained her bowl, the King was pleased to clap his hands. Then he and I must retire for our private interview, to another house. He gave me his own staff and made me pass before him; and in the interview, which was long and delicate, he twice called me *afioga*. Ah, that leaves you cold, but I am

Samoan enough to have been moved. *Susuga* is my accepted rank; to be called *afioga*—Heavens! what an advance—and it leaves Europe cold. But it staggered my Henry. The first time it was complicated "lana susuga *ma* lana afioga—his excellency *and* his majesty" the next time plain Majesty. Henry then begged to interrupt the interview and tell who he was—he is a small family chief in Savaii, not very small—"I do not wish the king," says he, "to think me a boy from Apia." On our return to the palace, we separated. I had asked for the ladies to sleep alone—that was understood; but that Tusitala—his afioga Tusitala—should go out with the other young men, and not sleep with the highborn females of his family—was a doctrine received with difficulty. Lloyd and I had one screen, Graham and Leigh another, and we slept well.

In the morning I was first abroad before dawn; not very long, already there was a stir of birds. A little after, I heard singing from the King's chapel—exceeding good—and went across in the hour when the east is yellow and the morning bank is breaking up, to hear it nearer. All about the chapel, the guards were posted, and all saluted Tusitala. I could not refrain from smiling: "So there is a place too," I thought, "where sentinels salute me." Mine has been a queer life.

Breakfast was rather a protracted business. And that was scarce over when we were called to the great house (now finished—recall your earlier letters) to see a royal kava. This function is of rare use; I know grown Samoans who have never witnessed it. It is, besides, as you are to hear, a piece of prehistoric history, crystallised in figures, and the facts largely forgotten; an acted hieroglyph. The house is really splendid; in the rafters in the midst, two carved and coloured model birds are posted; the only thing of the sort I have ever remarked in Samoa, the Samoans being literal observers of the second commandment. At one side of the egg our party sat. a=

Mataafa, b=Lady J., c=Belle, d=Tusitala, e=Graham, f=Lloyd, g=Captain Leigh, h=Henry, i=Popo. The x's round are the high chiefs, each man in his historical position. One side of the house is set apart for the king alone; we were allowed there as his guests and Henry as our interpreter. It was a huge trial to the lad, when a speech was made to me which he must translate, and I made a speech in answer which he had to orate, full-



breathed, to that big circle; he blushed through his dark skin, but looked and acted like a gentleman and a young fellow of sense; then the kava came to the king; he poured one drop in libation, drank another, and flung the remainder outside the house behind him. Next came the turn of the old shapeless stone marked T. It stands for one of the king's titles, Tamasoalii; Mataafa is Tamasoalii this day, but cannot drink for it; and the stone must first be washed with water, and then have the bowl emptied on it. Then—the order I cannot recall—came

the turn of y and z, two orators of the name of Malietoa; the first took his kava down plain, like an ordinary man; the second must be packed to bed under a big sheet of tapa, and be massaged by anxious assistants and rise on his elbow groaning to drink his cup. W., a great hereditary war man, came next; five times the cup-bearers marched up and down the house and passed the cup on, five times it was filled and the general's name and titles heralded at the bowl, and five times he refused it (after examination) as too small. It is said this commemorates a time when Malietoa at the head of his army suffered much for want of supplies. Then this same military gentleman must *drink* five cups, one from each of the great names: all which took a precious long time. He acted very well, haughtily and in a society tone *outlining* the part. The difference was marked when he subsequently made a speech in his own character as a plain God-fearing chief. A few more high chiefs, then Tusitala; one more, and then Lady Jersey; one more, and then Captain Leigh, and so on with the rest of our party—Henry of course excepted. You see in public, Lady Jersey followed me—just so far was the secret kept.

Then we came home; Belle, Graham, and Lloyd to the Chinaman's, I with Lady Jersey, to lunch; so, severally home. Thursday I have forgotten: Saturday, I began again on Davie; on Sunday, the Jersey party came up to call and carried me to dinner. As I came out, to ride home, the search-lights of the *Curaçoa* were lightening on the horizon from many miles away, and next morning she came in. Tuesday was huge fun: a reception at Haggard's. All our party dined there; Lloyd and I, in the absence of Haggard and Leigh, had to play aide-de-camp and host for about twenty minutes, and I presented the population of Apia at random but (luck helping) without one mistake. Wednesday we had two middies to lunch. Thursday we had Eeles and Hoskyn (lieutenant and doctor—very, very nice fellows—simple, good and

not the least dull) to dinner. Saturday, Graham and I lunched on board; Graham, Belle, Lloyd dined at the G.'s; and Austin and the *whole* of our servants went with them to an evening entertainment; the more bold returning by lantern-light. Yesterday, Sunday, Belle and I were off by about half past eight, left our horses at a public house, and went on board the *Curaçoa*, in the wardroom skiff; were entertained in the wardroom; thence on deck to the service, which was a great treat; three fiddles and a harmonium and excellent choir, and the great ship's company joining: on shore in Haggard's big boat to lunch with the party. Thence all together to Vailima, where we read aloud a Ouida Romance we have been secretly writing; in which Haggard was the hero, and each one of the authors had to draw a portrait of him or herself in a Ouida light. Leigh, Lady J., Fanny, R. L. S., Belle and Graham were the authors.

In the midst of this gay life, I have finally recopied two chapters, and drafted for the first time three of Davie Balfour. But it is not a life that would continue to suit me, and if I have not continued to write to you, you will scarce wonder. And to-day we all go down again to dinner, and to-morrow they all come up to lunch! The world is too much with us. But it now nears an end, to-day already the *Curaçoa* has sailed; and on Saturday or Sunday Lady Jersey will follow them in the mail steamer. I am sending you a wire by her hands as far as Sydney, that is to say either you or Cassell, about *Falesá:* I will not allow it to be called *Uma* in book form, that is not the logical name of the story. Nor can I have the marriage contract omitted; and the thing is full of misprints abominable. In the picture, Uma is rot; so is the old man and the negro; but Wiltshire is splendid, and Case will do. It seems badly illuminated, but this may be printing. How have I seen this first number? Not through your attention,

guilty one! Lady Jersey had it, and only mentioned it yesterday.[1]

I ought to say how much we all like the Jersey party. Leigh is very amusing in his way. Lady Margaret is a charming girl. And Lady Jersey is in all ways admirable, so unfussy, so plucky, so very kind and gracious. My boy Henry was enraptured with the manners of the *Tamaitai Sili* (chief lady). Among our other occupations, I did a bit of a supposed epic describing our tryst at the ford of the Gasegase; and Belle and I made a little book of caricatures and verses about incidents on the visit.

Tuesday.—The wild round of gaiety continues. After I had written to you yesterday, the brain being wholly extinct, I played piquet all morning with Graham. After lunch down to call on the U.S. consul, hurt in a steeplechase; thence back to the new girls' school which Lady J. was to open, and where my ladies met me. Lady J. is really an orator, with a voice of gold; the rest of us played our unremarked parts; missionaries, Haggard, myself, a Samoan chief, holding forth in turn; myself with (at least) a golden brevity. Thence, Fanny, Belle, and I to town, to our billiard room in Haggard's back garden, where we found Lloyd and where Graham joined us. The three men first dressed, with the ladies in a corner; and then, to leave them a free field, we went off to Haggard and Leigh's quarters, whereafter all to dinner, where our two parties, a brother of Colonel Kitchener's, a passing globe-trotter, and Clarke the missionary. A very gay evening, with all sorts of chaff and mirth, and a moonlit ride home, and to bed before 12.30. And now to-day, we have the Jersey-Haggard troupe to lunch, and I must pass the morning dressing ship.

Thursday, Sept. 1st.—I sit to write to you now, 7.15, all the world in bed except myself, accounted for, and Belle and Graham, down at Haggard's at dinner. Not

[1] I had not cared to send him the story as thus docked and rechristened in its serial shape.

a leaf is stirring here ; but the moon overhead (now of a good bigness) is obscured and partly revealed in a whirling covey of thin storm-clouds. By Jove, it blows above.

From 8 till 11.15 on Tuesday, I dressed ship, and in particular cleaned crystal, my specialty. About 11.30 the guests began to arrive before I was dressed, and between while I had written a parody for Lloyd to sing. Yesterday, Wednesday, I had to start out about 3 for town, had a long interview with the head of the German Firm about some work in my new house, got over to Lloyd's billiard-room about six, on the way whither I met Fanny and Belle coming down with one Kitchener, a brother of the Colonel's. Dined in the billiard-room, discovered we had forgot to order oatmeal ; whereupon in the moonlit evening, I set forth in my tropical array, mess jacket and such, to get the oatmeal, and meet a young fellow C.—and not a bad young fellow either, only an idiot—as drunk as Crœsus. He wept with me, he wept for me ; he talked like a bad character in an impudently bad farce ; I could have laughed aloud to hear, and could make you laugh by repeating, but laughter was not uppermost.

This morning at about seven, I set off after the lost sheep. I could have no horse ; all that could be mounted —we have one girth-sore and one dead-lame in the establishment—were due at a picnic about 10.30. The morning was very wet, and I set off barefoot, with my trousers over my knees, and a macintosh. Presently I had to take a side path in the bush ; missed it ; came forth in a great oblong patch of taro solemnly surrounded by forest —no soul, no sign, no sound—and as I stood there at a loss, suddenly between the showers out broke the note of a harmonium and a woman's voice singing an air that I know very well, but have (as usual) forgot the name of. 'Twas from a great way off, but seemed to fill the world. It was strongly romantic, and gave me a point which brought me, by all sorts of forest wading, to an open

space of palms. These were of all ages, but mostly at that age when the branches arch from the ground level, range themselves, with leaves exquisitely green. The whole interspace was overgrown with convolvulus, purple, yellow and white, often as deep as to my waist, in which I floundered aimlessly. The very mountain was invisible from here. The rain came and went; now in sunlit April showers, now with the proper tramp and rattle of the tropics. All this while I met no sight or sound of man, except the voice which was now silent, and a damned pig-fence that headed me off at every corner. Do you know barbed wire? Think of a fence of it on rotten posts, and you barefoot. But I crossed it at last with my heart in my mouth and no harm done. Thence at last to C.'s.: no C. Next place I came to was in the zone of woods. They offered me a buggy and set a black boy to wash my legs and feet. "Washum legs belong that fellow white-man" was the command. So at last I ran down my son of a gun in the hotel, sober, and with no story to tell; penitent, I think. As I sat and looked at him, I knew from my inside the biggest truth in life: there is only one thing that we cannot forgive, and that is ugliness —*our* ugliness. There is no ugliness, no beauty; only that which makes me (*ipse*) sicken or rejoice. And poor C. makes me sicken. Yet, according to canons, he is not amiss. Home, by buggy and my poor feet, up three miles of root, boulder, gravel, and liquid mud, slipping back at every step.

Sunday, Sept. 4th.—Hope you will be able to read a word of the last, no joke writing by a bad lantern with a groggy hand and your glasses mislaid. Not that the hand is not better, as you see by the absence of the amanuensis hitherto. Mail came Friday, and a communication from yourself much more decent than usual, for which I thank you. Glad the *Wrecker* should so hum; but Lord, what fools these mortals be!

So far yesterday, the citation being wrung from me

by remembrance of many reviews. I have now received all *Falesá*, and my admiration for that tale rises ; I believe it is in some ways my best work ; I am pretty sure, at least, I have never done anything better than Wiltshire.

Monday, 13*th September* 1892.—On Wednesday the Spinsters of Apia gave a ball to a select crowd. Fanny, Belle, Lloyd, and I rode down, met Haggard by the way and joined company with him. Dinner with Haggard, and thence to the ball. The Chief Justice appeared ; it was immediately remarked, and whispered from one to another, that he and I had the only red sashes in the room,—and they were both of the hue of blood, sir, blood. He shook hands with myself and all the members of my family. Then the cream came, and I found myself in the same set of a quadrille with his honour. We dance here in Apia a most fearful and wonderful quadrille, I don't know where the devil they fished it from ; but it is rackety and prancing and embraceatory beyond words ; perhaps it is best defined in Haggard's expression of a gambado. When I and my great enemy found ourselves involved in this gambol, and crossing hands, and kicking up, and being embraced almost in common by large and quite respectable females, we—or I—tried to preserve some rags of dignity, but not for long. The deuce of it is that, personally, I love this man ; his eye speaks to me, I am pleased in his society. We exchanged a glance, and then a grin ; the man took me in his confidence ; and through the remainder of that prance we pranced for each other. Hard to imagine any position more ridiculous ; a week before he had been trying to rake up evidence against me by brow-beating and threatening a half-white interpreter ; that very morning I had been writing most villainous attacks upon him for the Times ; and we meet and smile, and—damn it !—like each other. I do my best to damn the man and drive him from these islands ; but the weakness endures—I love him. This is a thing I would despise in anybody else ; but he is so jolly insidious

and ingratiating! No, sir, I can't dislike him; but if I don't make hay of him, it shall not be for want of trying.

Yesterday, we had two Germans and a young American boy at lunch; and in the afternoon, Vailima was in a state of siege; ten white people on the front verandah, at least as many brown in the cook-house, and countless blacks to see the black boy Arrick.

Which reminds me, Arrick was sent Friday was a week to the German Firm with a note, and was not home on time. Lloyd and I were going bedward, it was late with a bright moon—ah, poor dog, you know no such moons as these!—when home came Arrick with his head in a white bandage and his eyes shining. He had had a fight with other blacks, Malaita boys; many against one, and one with a knife: "I KNICKED 'EM DOWN, three four!" he cried; and had himself to be taken to the doctor's and bandaged. Next day, he could not work, glory of battle swelled too high in his threadpaper breast; he had made a one-stringed harp for Austin, borrowed it, came to Fanny's room, and sang war-songs and danced a war dance in honour of his victory. And it appears, by subsequent advices, that it was a serious victory enough; four of his assailants went to hospital, and one is thought in danger. All Vailima rejoiced at this news.

Five more chapters of David, 22 to 27, go to Baxter. All love affair; seems pretty good to me. Will it do for the young person? I don't know: since the Beach, I know nothing, except that men are fools and hypocrites, and I know less of them than I was fond enough to fancy.

To Mrs. Charles Fairchild

[*Vailima, August* 1892.]

MY DEAR MRS. FAIRCHILD,—Thank you a thousand times for your letter. You are the Angel of (the sort of) Information (that I care about): I appoint you successor

to the newspaper press; and I beg of you, whenever you wish to gird at the age, or think the bugs out of proportion to the roses, or despair, or enjoy any cosmic or epochal emotion, to sit down again and write to the Hermit of Samoa. What do I think of it all? Well, I love the romantic solemnity of youth; and even in this form, although not without laughter, I have to love it still. They are such ducks! But what are they made of? We were just as solemn as that about atheism and the stars and humanity; but we were all for belief anyway—we held atheism and sociology (of which none of us, nor indeed anybody, knew anything) for a gospel and an iron rule of life; and it was lucky enough, or there would have been more windows broken. What is apt to puzzle one at first sight in the New Youth is that, with such rickety and risky problems always at heart, they should not plunge down a Niagara of Dissolution. But let us remember the high practical timidity of youth. I was a particularly brave boy—this I think of myself, looking back—and plunged into adventures and experiments, and ran risks that it still surprises me to recall. But, dear me, what a fear I was in of that strange blind machinery in the midst of which I stood; and with what a compressed heart and what empty lungs I would touch a new crank and await developments! I do not mean to say I do not fear life still; I do; and that terror (for an adventurer like myself) is still one of the chief joys of living.

But it was different indeed while I was yet girt with the priceless robes of inexperience; then the fear was exquisite and infinite. And so, when you see all these little Ibsens, who seem at once so dry and so excitable, and faint in swathes over a play (I suppose—for a wager) that would seem to me merely tedious, smile behind your hand, and remember the little dears are all in a blue funk. It must be very funny, and to a spectator like yourself I almost envy it. But never get desperate; human nature is human nature; and the Roman Empire, since the

Romans founded it and made our European human nature what it is, bids fair to go on and to be true to itself. These little bodies will all grow up and become men and women, and have heaps of fun; nay, and are having it now; and whatever happens to the fashion of the age, it makes no difference—there are always high and brave and amusing lives to be lived; and a change of key, however exotic, does not exclude melody. Even Chinamen, hard as we find it to believe, enjoy being Chinese. And the Chinaman stands alone to be unthinkable; natural enough, as the representative of the only other great civilisation. Take my people here at my doors; their life is a very good one; it is quite thinkable, quite acceptable to us. And the little dears will be soon skating on the other foot; sooner or later, in each generation, the one-half of them at least begin to remember all the material they had rejected when first they made and nailed up their little theory of life; and these become reactionaries or conservatives, and the ship of man begins to fill upon the other tack.

Here is a sermon, by your leave! It is your own fault, you have amused and interested me so much by your breath of the New Youth, which comes to me from so far away, where I live up here in my mountain, and secret messengers bring me letters from rebels, and the government sometimes seizes them, and generally grumbles in its beard that Stevenson should really be deported. O my life is the more lively, never fear!

It has recently been most amusingly varied by a visit from Lady Jersey. I took her over mysteriously (under the pseudonym of my cousin, Miss Amelia Balfour) to visit Mataafa, our rebel; and we had great fun, and wrote a Ouida novel on our life here, in which every author had to describe himself in the Ouida glamour, and of which—for the Jerseys intend printing it—I must let you have a copy. My wife's chapter, and my description of myself, should, I think, amuse you. But there were finer touches

still; as when Belle and Lady Jersey came out to brush their teeth in front of the rebel King's palace, and the night guard squatted opposite on the grass and watched the process; or when I and my interpreter, and the King with his secretary, mysteriously disappeared to conspire. —Ever yours sincerely, R. L. STEVENSON.

TO THE CHILDREN IN THE CELLAR

This time the children in the Kilburn cellar are addressed direct, with only a brief word at the end to their instructress.

Vailima Plantation, Samoan Islands,
September 4th, 1892.

DEAR CHILDREN IN THE CELLAR,—I told you before something of the black boys who come here for work on the plantations, and some of whom run away and live a wild life in the forests of the islands. Now I want to tell you of one who lived in the house of the lean man. Like the rest of them here, he is a little fellow, and when he goes about in old, battered, cheap European clothes, looks very small and shabby. When first he came he was as lean as a tobacco-pipe, and his smile (like that of almost all the others) was the sort that makes you half wish to smile yourself, and half wish to cry. However, the boys in the kitchen took him in hand and fed him up. They would set him down alone to table and wait upon him till he had his fill, which was a good long time to wait; and the first thing we noticed was that his little stomach began to stick out like a pigeon's breast; and then the food got a little wider spread and he started little calves to his legs; and last of all he began to get quite saucy and impudent, so that we could know what sort of a fellow he really was when he was no longer afraid of being thrashed. He is really what you ought to call a young man, though I suppose nobody in the whole wide world has any idea of his age; and, as far as his behaviour goes, you can only

think of him as a big little child with a good deal of sense. When Austin built his fort against the Indians, Arick (for that is the black boy's name) liked nothing so much as to help him. And this is very funny, when you think that of all the dangerous savages in this island Arick is one of the most dangerous. The other day, besides, he made Austin a musical instrument of the sort they use in his own country, a harp with only one string. He took a stick about three feet long, and perhaps four inches round. The under side he hollowed out in a deep trench to serve as sounding box; the two ends of the upper side he made to curve upward like the ends of a canoe, and between these he stretched the single string. He plays upon it with a match or a little piece of stick, and sings to it songs of his own country, of which no person here can understand a single word, and which are very likely all about fighting with his enemies in battle, and killing them, and I am sorry to say cooking them in a ground oven and eating them for supper when the fight is over.

For Arick is really what you might call a savage, though a savage is a very different person in reality, and a very much nicer, from what he is made to appear in little books. He is the sort of person that everybody smiles to, or makes faces at, or gives a smack to as he goes by; the sort of person that all the girls on the plantation give the best seat to, and help first, and love to decorate with flowers and ribbons, and yet all the while are laughing at him; the sort of person who likes best to play with Austin, and whom Austin perhaps (when he is allowed) likes best to play with. He is all grins and giggles, and little steps out of dances, and little droll ways, to attract people's attention and set them laughing. And yet when you come to look at him closer, you will find that his body is all covered with scars. This was when he was a child. There was a war, as is the way in these wild islands, between his village and the next, much as if there were war in London between one street and another; and all the children ran about

playing in the middle of the trouble, and I dare say took no more notice of the war than you children in London do of a general election. But sometimes, at general elections, English children may get run over by processions in the street; and it chanced that as little Arick was running about in the bush, and very busy about his playing, he ran into the midst of the warriors on the other side. These speared him with a poisoned spear; and his own people, when they had found him lying for dead, and in order to cure him of the poison, cut him up with knives that were probably made of fish-bones.

This is a very savage piece of child-life, and Arick, for all his good-nature, is still a very savage person. I have told you how the black boys sometimes run away from the plantations, and live behind alone in the forest, building little sheds to protect them from the rain, and sometimes planting little gardens of food, but for the most part living the best they can upon the nuts of the trees and yams that they dig with their hands out of the earth. I do not think there can be anywhere in the world people more wretched than these runaways. They cannot return, for they would only return to be punished. They can never hope to see again their own land or their own people —indeed, I do not know what they can hope, but just to find enough yams every day to keep them from starvation. And in the wet season of the year, which is our summer and your winter, and the rain falls day after day far harder and louder than the loudest thunder-plump that ever fell in England, and the noon is sometimes so dark that the lean man is glad to light his lamp to write by, I can think of nothing so dreary as the state of these poor runaway slaves in the houseless bush. You are to remember, besides, that the people of this island hate and fear them because they are cannibals, sit and tell tales of them about their lamps at night in their own comfortable houses, and are sometimes afraid to lie down to sleep if they think there is a lurking black boy in the neighbourhood. Well

now, Arick is of their own race and language, only he is a little more lucky because he has not run away; and how do you think that he proposed to help them? He asked if he might not have a gun. "What do you want with a gun, Arick?" was asked. And he said quite simply, and with his nice good-natured smile, that if he had a gun he would go up into the high bush and shoot black boys as men shoot pigeons. He said nothing about eating them, nor do I think he really meant to. I think all he wanted was to clear the property of vermin as gamekeepers at home kill weasels, or housewives mice.

The other day he was sent down on an errand to the German Firm where many of the black boys live. It was very late when he came home on a bright moonlight night. He had a white bandage round his head, his eyes shone, and he could scarcely speak for excitement. It seems some of the black boys who were his enemies at home had attacked him, and one with a knife. By his own account he had fought very well, but the odds were heavy; the man with the knife had cut him both in the head and back, he had been struck down, and if some of the black boys of his own side had not come to the rescue, he must certainly have been killed. I am sure no Christmas-box could make any of you children so happy as this fight made Arick. A great part of the next day he neglected his work to play upon the one-stringed harp and sing songs about his great victory. And to-day, when he is gone upon his holiday, he has announced that he is going back to the German Firm to have another battle and another triumph. I do not think he will go all the same, or I should be more uneasy, for I do not want to have my Arick killed; and there is no doubt that if he begins to fight again, he will be likely to go on with it very far. For I have seen him once when he saw, or thought he saw, an enemy. It was one of our dreadful days of rain, the sound of it like a great waterfall or like a tempest of wind blowing in the forest; and there came to our door two runaway black boys

seeking work. In such weather as that my enemy's dog (as Shakespeare says) should have had a right to shelter. But when Arick saw these two poor rogues coming with their empty bellies and drenched clothes, and one of them with a stolen cutlass in his hand, through that world of falling water, he had no thought of pity in his heart. Crouching behind one of the pillars of the verandah, which he held in his two hands, his mouth drew back into a strange sort of smile, his eyes grew bigger and bigger, and his whole face was just like the one word Murder in big capitals.

Now I have told you a great deal too much about poor Arick's savage nature, and now I must tell you about a great amusement he had the other day. There came an English ship of war in the harbour, and the officers very good naturedly gave an entertainment of songs and dances and a magic-lantern, to which Arick and Austin were allowed to go. At the door of the hall there were crowds of black boys waiting and trying to peep in, the way children at home lie about and peep under the tent of a circus ; and you may be sure Arick was a very proud person when he passed them all by and entered the hall with his ticket. I wish I knew what he thought of the whole performance ; but the housekeeper of the lean man, who sat just in front of him, tells me what seemed to startle him the most. The first thing was when two of the officers came out with blackened faces like Christy minstrel boys and began to dance. Arick was sure that they were really black and his own people, and he was wonderfully surprised to see them dance this new European style of dance. But the great affair was the magic-lantern. The hall was made quite dark, which was very little to Arick's taste. He sat there behind the housekeeper, nothing to be seen of him but eyes and teeth, and his heart beating finely in his little scarred breast. And presently there came out on the white sheet that great bright eye of light that I am sure all you children must have often seen. It was quite new to Arick, he had no

idea what would happen next; and in his fear and excitement, he laid hold with his little slim black fingers like a bird's claws on the neck of the housekeeper in front of him. All through the rest of the show, as one picture followed another on the white sheet, he sat there gasping and clutching at the housekeeper's neck, and goodness knows whether he were more pleased or frightened. Doubtless it was a very fine thing to see all these bright pictures coming out and dying away again one after another; but doubtless it was rather alarming also, for how was it done? And at last, when there appeared upon the screen the head of a black woman (as it might be his own mother or sister), and the black woman of a sudden began to roll her eyes, the fear or the excitement, whichever it was, wrung out of him a loud shuddering sob. And I think we all ought to admire his courage when, after an evening spent in looking on at such wonderful miracles, he and Austin set out alone through the forest to the lean man's house. It was late at night and pitch dark when some of the party overtook the little white boy and the big black boy marching among the trees with their lantern. I have told you the wood has an ill name, and all the people of the island believe it to be full of devils; but even if you do not believe in the devils, it is a pretty dreadful place to walk in by the moving light of a lantern, with nothing about you but a curious whirl of shadows and the black night above and beyond. But Arick kept his courage up, and I dare say Austin's too, with a perpetual chatter, so that the people coming after heard his voice long before they saw the shining of the lantern.

My dear Miss Boodle,—will I be asking too much that you should send me back my letters to the Children, or copies, if you prefer; I have an idea that they may perhaps help in time to make up a book on the South Seas for children. I have addressed the Cellar so long this time that you must take this note for yourself and excuse, yours most sincerely, R. L. Stevenson.

To Sidney Colvin

Thursday, 15th September [1892].

MY DEAR COLVIN,—On Tuesday, we had our young adventurer[1] ready, and Fanny, Belle, he and I set out about three of a dark, deadly hot, and deeply unwholesome afternoon. Belle had the lad behind her; I had a pint of champagne in either pocket, a parcel in my hands, and as Jack had a girth sore and I rode without a girth, I might be said to occupy a very unstrategic position. On the way down, a little dreary, beastly drizzle beginning to come out of the darkness, Fanny put up an umbrella, her horse bounded, reared, cannoned into me, cannoned into Belle and the lad, and bolted for home. It really might and ought to have been an A1 catastrophe; but nothing happened beyond Fanny's nerves being a good deal shattered; of course, she could not tell what had happened to us until she got her horse mastered.

Next day, Haggard went off to the Commission and left us in charge of his house; all our people came down in wreaths of flowers; we had a boat for them; Haggard had a flag in the Commission boat for us; and when at last the steamer turned up, the young adventurer was carried on board in great style, with a new watch and chain, and about three pound ten of tips, and five big baskets of fruit as free-will offerings to the captain. Captain Morse had us all to lunch; champagne flowed, so did compliments; and I did the affable celebrity life-sized. It made a great send-off for the young adventurer. As the boat drew off, he was standing at the head of the gangway, supported by three handsome ladies—one of them a real full-blown beauty, Madame Green, the singer—and looking very engaging himself, between smiles and tears. Not that he cried in public. My, but we were a tired crowd! However, it is always a blessing to get

[1] Austin Strong, on his way to school in California.

home, and this time it was a sort of wonder to ourselves that we got back alive. Casualties: Fanny's back jarred, horse incident; Belle, bad headache, tears, and champagne; self, idiocy, champagne, fatigue; Lloyd, ditto, ditto. As for the adventurer, I believe he will have a delightful voyage for his little start in life. But there is always something touching in a mite's first launch.

Date unknown.—I am now well on with the third part of the *Débâcle.*[1] The two first I liked much; the second completely knocking me; so far as it has gone, this third part appears the ramblings of a dull man who has forgotten what he has to say—he reminds me of an M.P. But Sedan was really great, and I will pick no holes. The batteries under fire, the red-cross folk, the county charge—perhaps, above all, Major Bouroche and the operations, all beyond discussion; and every word about the Emperor splendid.

September 30th.—David Balfour done, and its author along with it, or nearly so. Strange to think of even our doctor here repeating his nonsense about debilitating climate. Why, the work I have been doing the last twelve months, in one continuous spate, mostly with annoying interruptions and without any collapse to mention, would be incredible in Norway. But I *have* broken down now, and will do nothing as long as I possibly can. With *David Balfour* I am very well pleased; in fact these labours of the last year—I mean *Falesá* and *D. B.*, not Samoa, of course—seem to me to be nearer what I mean than anything I have ever done; nearer what I mean by fiction; the nearest thing before was *Kidnapped.* I am not forgetting the *Master of Ballantrae,* but that lacked all pleasurableness, and hence was imperfect in essence. So you see, if I am a little tired, I do not repent.

The third part of the *Débâcle* may be all very fine; but I cannot read it. It suffers from *impaired vitality,* and *uncertain aim;* two deadly sicknesses. Vital—that's what I am at, first: wholly vital, with a buoyancy of life. Then

[1] By Émile Zola.

lyrical, if it may be, and picturesque, always with an epic value of scenes, so that the figures remain in the mind's eye for ever.

October 8th.—Suppose you sent us some of the catalogues of the parties what vends statutes? I don't want colossal Herculeses, but about quarter size and less. If the catalogues were illustrated it would probably be found a help to weak memories. These may be found to alleviate spare moments, when we sometimes amuse ourselves by thinking how fine we shall make the palace if we do not go pop. Perhaps in the same way it might amuse you to send us any pattern of wall paper that might strike you as cheap, pretty, and suitable for a room in a hot and extremely bright climate. It should be borne in mind that our climate can be extremely dark too. Our sitting-room is to be in varnished wood. The room I have particularly in mind is a sort of bed and sitting-room, pretty large, lit on three sides, and the colour in favour of its proprietor at present is a topazy yellow. But then with what colour to relieve it? For a little work-room of my own at the back, I should rather like to see some patterns of unglossy —well, I'll be hanged if I can describe this red—it's not Turkish and it's not Roman and it's not Indian, but it seems to partake of the two last, and yet it can't be either of them, because it ought to be able to go with vermillion. Ah, what a tangled web we weave—anyway, with what brains you have left choose me and send me some—many —patterns of this exact shade.

A few days ago it was Haggard's birthday and we had him and his cousin to dinner—bless me if I ever told you of his cousin!—he is here anyway, and a fine, pleasing specimen, so that we have concluded (after our own happy experience) that the climate of Samoa must be favourable to cousins.[1] Then we went out on the verandah in a lovely

[1] The reference is to the writer's maternal cousin, Mr. Graham Balfour (*Samoicè*, "Pelema"), who during these months and again later was an inmate of the home at Vailima: see above, p. 223.

moonlight, drinking port, hearing the cousin play and sing, till presently we were informed that our boys had got up a siva in Lafaele's house to which we were invited. It was entirely their own idea. The house, you must understand, is one-half floored, and one-half bare earth, and the daïs stands a little over knee high above the level of the soil. The daïs was the stage, with three footlights. We audience sat on mats on the floor, and the cook and three of our work-boys, sometimes assisted by our two ladies, took their places behind the footlights and began a topical Vailima song. The burden was of course that of a Samoan popular song about a white man who objects to all that he sees in Samoa. And there was of course a special verse for each one of the party—Lloyd was called the dancing man (practically the Chief's handsome son) of Vailima; he was also, in his character I suppose of overseer, compared to a policeman—Belle had that day been the almoner in a semi-comic distribution of wedding rings and thimbles (bought cheap at an auction) to the whole plantation company, fitting a ring on every man's finger, and a ring and a thimble on both the women's. This was very much in character with her native name *Teuila*, the adorner of the ugly—so of course this was the point of her verse and at a given moment all the performers displayed the rings upon their fingers. Pelema (the cousin —*our* cousin) was described as watching from the house and whenever he saw any boy not doing anything, running and doing it himself. Fanny's verse was less intelligible, but it was accompanied in the dance with a pantomime of terror well-fitted to call up her haunting, indefatigable and diminutive presence in a blue gown.

To Gordon Browne

Vailima, Samoa [*Autumn* 1892].

To the Artist who did the illustrations to "Uma."

DEAR SIR,—I only know you under the initials G. B.,

but you have done some exceedingly spirited and satisfactory illustrations to my story *The Beach of Falesá*, and I wish to write and thank you expressly for the care and talent shown. Such numbers of people can do good black and whites! So few can illustrate a story, or apparently read it. You have shown that you can do both, and your creation of Wiltshire is a real illumination of the text. It was exactly so that Wiltshire dressed and looked, and you have the line of his nose to a nicety. His nose is an inspiration. Nor should I forget to thank you for Case, particularly in his last appearance. It is a singular fact —which seems to point still more directly to inspiration in your case—that your missionary actually resembles the flesh-and-blood person from whom Mr. Tarleton was drawn. The general effect of the islands is all that could be wished; indeed I have but one criticism to make, that in the background of Case taking the dollar from Mr. Tarleton's head—head—not hand, as the fools have printed it —the natives have a little too much the look of Africans.

But the great affair is that you have been to the pains to illustrate my story instead of making conscientious black and whites of people sitting talking. I doubt if you have left unrepresented a single pictorial incident. I am writing by this mail to the editor in the hopes that I may buy from him the originals, and I am, dear sir, your very much obliged, ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

To Miss Morse

The next is an answer to an acknowledgment from a lady in the United States, one of many similar which he from time to time received, of help and encouragement derived from his writings.

Vailima, Samoan Islands, October 7th, 1892.

DEAR MADAM,—I have a great diffidence in answering your valued letter. It would be difficult for me to express the feelings with which I read it—and am now trying to re-read it as I dictate this.

You ask me to forgive what you say "must seem a liberty," and I find that I cannot thank you sufficiently or even find a word with which to qualify your letter. Dear Madam, such a communication even the vainest man would think a sufficient reward for a lifetime of labour. That I should have been able to give so much help and pleasure to your sister is the subject of my grateful wonder.

That she, being dead, and speaking with your pen, should be able to repay the debt with such a liberal interest, is one of those things that reconcile us with the world and make us take hope again. I do not know what I have done to deserve so beautiful and touching a compliment; and I feel there is but one thing fit for me to say here, that I will try with renewed courage to go on in the same path, and to deserve, if not to receive, a similar return from others.

You apologise for speaking so much about yourselves. Dear Madam, I thought you did so too little. I should have wished to have known more of those who were so sympathetic as to find a consolation in my work, and so graceful and so tactful as to acknowledge it in such a letter as was yours.

Will you offer to your mother the expression of a sympathy which (coming from a stranger) must seem very airy, but which yet is genuine; and accept for yourself my gratitude for the thought which inspired you to write to me and the words which you found to express it.

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

TO MISS TAYLOR

Lady Taylor had died soon after the settlement of the Stevenson family at Vailima. The second paragraph refers to a test which had been set before an expert in the reading of character by handwriting.

Vailima, Samoan Islands, October 7th, 1892.

MY DEAR IDA,—I feel very much the implied reproof in yours just received; but I assure you there is no fear

of our forgetting either Una or yourself, or your dear mother, who was one of the women I have most admired and loved in the whole of my way through life. The truth is that Fanny writes to nobody and that I am on the whole rather overworked. I compose lots of letters to lots of unforgotten friends, but when it comes to taking the pen between my fingers there are many impediments. Hence it comes that I am now writing to you by an amanuensis, at which I know you will be very angry. Well, it was Hobson's choice. A little while ago I had very bad threatenings of scrivener's cramp; and if Belle (Fanny's daughter, of whom you remember to have heard) had not taken up the pen for my correspondence, I doubt you would never have heard from me again except in the way of books. I wish you and Una would be so good as to write to us now and then even without encouragement. An unsolicited letter would be almost certain (sooner or later, depending on the activity of the conscience) to produce some sort of an apology for an answer.

All this upon one condition: that you send me your friend's description of my looks, age and character. The character of my work I am not so careful about. But did you ever hear of anything so tantalizing as for you to tell me the story and not send me your notes? I expect it was a device to extract an answer; and, as you see, it has succeeded. Let me suggest (if your friend be handy) that the present letter would be a very delicate test. It is in one person's handwriting, it expresses the ideas of another, of the writer herself you know nothing. I should be very curious to know what the sibyl will make of such a problem.

If you carry out your design of settling in London you must be sure and let us have the new address. I swear we shall write some time—and if the interval be long you must just take it on your own head for prophesying horrors. You remember how you always said we were but an encampment of Bedouins, and that you would awake some

morning to find us fled for ever. Nothing unsettled me more than these ill-judged remarks. I was doing my best to be a sedentary semi-respectable man in a suburban villa; and you were always shaking your head at me and assuring me (what I knew to be partly true) that it was all a farce. Even here, when I have sunk practically all that I possess, and have good health and my fill of congenial fighting, and could not possibly get away if I wanted ever so—even here and now the recollection of these infidel prophesies rings in my ears like an invitation to the sea. *Tu l'as voulu!*

I know you want some of our news, and it is all so far away that I know not when to begin. We have a big house and we are building another—pray God that we can pay for it. I am just reminded that we have no less than eight several places of habitation in this place, which was a piece of uncleared forest some three years ago. I think there are on my pay rolls at the present moment thirteen human souls, not counting two washerwomen who come and go. In addition to this I am at daggers drawn with the Government, have had my correspondence stopped and opened by the Chief Justice—it was correspondence with the so-called Rebel King,—and have had boys examined and threatened with deportation to betray the secrets of my relations with the same person. In addition to this I might direct attention to those trifling exercises of the fancy, my literary works, and I hope you won't think that I am likely to suffer from ennui. Nor is Fanny any less active. Ill or well, rain or shine, a little blue indefatigable figure is to be observed howking about certain patches of garden. She comes in heated and bemired up to the eyebrows, late for every meal. She has reached a sort of tragic placidity. Whenever she plants anything new the boys weed it up. Whenever she tries to keep anything for seed the house-boys throw it away. And she has reached that pitch of a kind of noble dejection that she would almost say she did not mind. Anyway, her cab-

bages have succeeded. Talolo (our native cook, and a very good one too) likened them the other day to the head of a German; and even this hyperbolical image was grudging. I remember all the trouble you had with servants at the Roost. The most of them were nothing to the trances that we have to go through here at times, when I have to hold a bed of justice, and take evidence which is never twice the same, and decide, practically blindfold, and after I have decided have the accuser take back the accusation in block and beg for mercy for the culprit. Conceive the annoyance of all this when you are very fond of both.—Your affectionate friend,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

To E. L. BURLINGAME

Vailima Plantation, Samoan Islands,
Oct. 10th, 1892.

MY DEAR BURLINGAME,—It is now, as you see, the 10th of October, and there has not reached the Island of Upolu one single copy, or rag of a copy, of the Samoa book. I lie; there has come one, and that in the pocket of a missionary man who is at daggers drawn with me, who lends it to all my enemies, conceals it from all my friends, and is bringing a lawsuit against me on the strength of expressions in the same which I have forgotten, and now cannot see. This is pretty tragic, I think you will allow; and I was inclined to fancy it was the fault of the Post Office. But I hear from my sister-in-law Mrs. Sanchez that she is in the same case, and has received no *Footnote*. I have also to consider that I had no letter from you last mail, although you ought to have received by that time "My Grandfather and Scott," and "Me and my Grandfather." Taking one consideration with another, therefore, I prefer to conceive that No. 743 Broadway has fallen upon gentle and continuous slumber, and is become an

enchanted palace among publishing houses. If it be not so, if the *Footnotes* were really sent, I hope you will fall upon the Post Office with all the vigour you possess. How does *The Wrecker* go in the States? It seems to be doing exceptionally well in England.—Yours sincerely,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

To SIDNEY COLVIN

This letter contains the first announcement of the scheme of *Weir of Hermiston.*

Vailima, October 28th, 1892.

MY DEAR COLVIN,—This is very late to begin the monthly budget, but I have a good excuse this time, for I have had a very annoying fever with symptoms of sore arm, and in the midst of it a very annoying piece of business which suffered no delay or idleness. . . .

The consequence of all this was that my fever got very much worse and your letter has not been hitherto written. But, my dear fellow, do compare these little larky fevers with the fine, healthy, prostrating colds of the dear old dead days at home. Here was I, in the middle of a pretty bad one, and I was able to put it in my pocket, and go down day after day, and attend to and put my strength into this beastly business. Do you see me doing that with a catarrh? And if I had done so, what would have been the result?

Last night, about four o'clock, Belle and I set off to Apia, whither my mother had preceded us. She was at the Mission; we went to Haggard's. There we had to wait the most unconscionable time for dinner. I do not wish to speak lightly of the Amanuensis, who is unavoidably present, but I may at least say for myself that I was as cross as two sticks. Dinner came at last, we had the tinned soup which is usually the *pièce de résistance* in the halls of Haggard, and we pitched into it. Followed an

excellent salad of tomatoes and crayfish, a good Indian curry, a tender joint of beef, a dish of pigeons, a pudding, cheese and coffee. I was so over-eaten after this "hunger and burst" that I could scarcely move; and it was my sad fate that night in the character of the local author to eloquute before the public—"Mr. Stevenson will read a selection from his own works"—a degrading picture. I had determined to read them the account of the hurricane; I do not know if I told you that my book has never turned up here, or rather only one copy has, and that in the unfriendly hands of ——. It has therefore only been seen by enemies; and this combination of mystery and evil report has been greatly envenomed by some ill-judged newspaper articles from the States. Altogether this specimen was listened to with a good deal of uncomfortable expectation on the part of the Germans, and when it was over was applauded with unmistakable relief. The public hall where these revels came off seems to be unlucky for me; I never go there but to some stone-breaking job. Last time it was the public meeting of which I must have written you; this time it was this uneasy but not on the whole unsuccessful experiment. Belle, my mother, and I rode home about midnight in a fine display of lightning and witch-fires. My mother is absent, so that I may dare to say that she struck me as voluble. The Amanuensis did not strike me the same way; she was probably thinking, but it was really rather a weird business, and I saw what I have never seen before, the witch-fires gathered into little bright blue points almost as bright as a night-light.

Saturday.—This is the day that should bring your letter; it is gray and cloudy and windless; thunder rolls in the mountain; it is a quarter past six, and I am alone, sir, alone in this workman's house, Belle and Lloyd having been down all yesterday to meet the steamer; they were scarce gone with most of the horses and all the saddles, than there began a perfect picnic of the sick and maim;

Iopu with a bad foot, Faauma with a bad shoulder, Fanny with yellow spots. It was at first proposed to carry all these to the doctor, particularly Faauma, whose shoulder bore an appearance of erysipelas, that sent the amateur below. No horses, no saddle. Now I had my horse and I could borrow Lafaele's saddle; and if I went alone I could do a job that had long been waiting; and that was to interview the doctor on another matter. Off I set in a hazy moonlight night; windless, like to-day; the thunder rolling in the mountain, as to-day; in the still groves, these little mushroom lamps glowing blue and steady, singly or in pairs. Well, I had my interview, said everything as I had meant, and with just the result I hoped for. The doctor and I drank beer together and discussed German literature until nine, and we parted the best of friends. I got home to a silent house of sleepers, only Fanny awaiting me; we talked awhile, in whispers, on the interview; then, I got a lantern and went across to the workman's house, now empty and silent, myself sole occupant. So to bed, prodigious tired but mighty content with my night's work, and to-day, with a headache and a chill, have written you this page, while my new novel waits. Of this I will tell you nothing, except the various names under consideration. First, it ought to be called—but of course that is impossible—

Braxfield.[1]

Then it *is* to be called either

Weir of Hermiston,
The Lord-Justice Clerk,
The Two Kirsties of the Cauldstaneslap,
or
The Four Black Brothers.

[1] Robert MacQueen, Lord Braxfield, the "Hanging Judge," (1722–1799). This historical personage furnished the conception of the chief character, but by no means the details or incidents of the story, which is indeed dated some years after his death.

Characters:

Adam Weir, Lord-Justice Clerk, called Lord Hermiston.
Archie, his son.
Aunt Kirstie Elliott, his housekeeper at Hermiston.
Elliott of the Cauldstaneslap, her brother.
Kirstie Elliott, his daughter.
Jim, . .
Gib, . .
Hob . . } his sons.
& .
Dandie, .
Patrick Innes, a young advocate.
The Lord-Justice General.

Scene, about Hermiston in the Lammermuirs and in Edinburgh. Temp. 1812. So you see you are to have another holiday from copra! The rain begins softly on the iron roof, and I will do the reverse and—dry up.

Sunday.—Yours with the diplomatic private opinion received. It is just what I should have supposed. *Ça m'est bien égal.*—The name is to be

The Lord-Justice Clerk.

None others are genuine. Unless it be

Lord-Justice Clerk Hermiston.

Nov. 2nd.—On Saturday we expected Captain Morse of the *Alameda* to come up to lunch, and on Friday with genuine South Sea hospitality had a pig killed. On the Saturday morning no pig. Some of the boys seemed to give a doubtful account of themselves; our next neighbour below in the wood is a bad fellow and very intimate with some of our boys, for whom his confounded house is like a fly-paper for flies. To add to all this, there was on the Saturday a great public presentation of food to the king and parliament men, an occasion on which it is almost dignified for a Samoan to steal anything, and entirely dignified for him to steal a pig.

(The Amanuensis went to the *talolo*, as it is called, and saw something so very pleasing she begs to interrupt the letter to tell it. The different villagers came in in bands —led by the maid of the village, followed by the young warriors. It was a very fine sight, for some three thousand people are said to have assembled. The men wore nothing but magnificent head-dresses and a bunch of leaves, and were oiled and glistening in the sunlight. One band had no maid but was led by a tiny child of about five—a serious little creature clad in a ribbon of grass and a fine head-dress, who skipped with elaborate leaps in front of the warriors, like a little kid leading a band of lions. A.M.)

The A.M. being done, I go on again. All this made it very possible that even if none of our boys had stolen the pig, some of them might know the thief. Besides, the theft, as it was a theft of meat prepared for a guest, had something of the nature of an insult, and "my face," in native phrase, "was ashamed." Accordingly, we determined to hold a bed of justice. It was done last night after dinner. I sat at the head of the table, Graham on my right hand, Henry Simelé at my left, Lloyd behind him. The house company sat on the floor around the walls—twelve all told. I am described as looking as like Braxfield as I could manage with my appearance; Graham, who is of a severe countenance, looked like Rhadamanthus; Lloyd was hideous to the view; and Simelé had all the fine solemnity of a Samoan chief. The proceedings opened by my delivering a Samoan prayer, which may be translated thus—"Our God, look down upon us and shine into our hearts. Help us to be far from falsehood so that each one of us may stand before Thy Face in his integrity." —Then, beginning with Simelé, every one came up to the table, laid his hand on the Bible, and repeated clause by clause after me the following oath—I fear it may sound even comic in English, but it is a very pretty piece of

Samoan, and struck direct at the most lively superstitions of the race. "This is the Holy Bible here that I am touching. Behold me, O God! If I know who it was that took away the pig, or the place to which it was taken, or have heard anything relating to it, and shall not declare the same—be made an end of by God this life of mine!" They all took it with so much seriousness and firmness that (as Graham said) if they were not innocent they would make invaluable witnesses. I was so far impressed by their bearing that I went no further, and the funny and yet strangely solemn scene came to an end.

Sunday, Nov. 6th.—Here is a long story to go back upon, and I wonder if I have either time or patience for the task?

Wednesday I had a great idea of match-making, and proposed to Henry that Faalé would make a good wife for him. I wish I had put this down when it was fresher in my mind, it was so interesting an interview. My gentleman would not tell if I were on or not. "I do not know yet; I will tell you next week. May I tell the sister of my father? No, better not, tell her when it is done." —"But will not your family be angry if you marry without asking them?"—"My village? What does my village want? Mats!" I said I thought the girl would grow up to have a great deal of sense, and my gentleman flew out upon me; she had sense now, he said.

Thursday, we were startled by the note of guns, and presently after heard it was an English warship. Graham and I set off at once, and as soon as we met any townsfolk they began crying to me that I was to be arrested. It was the *Vossische Zeitung* article which had been quoted in a paper. Went on board and saw Captain Bourke; he did not even know—not even guess—why he was here; having been sent off by cablegram from Auckland. It is hoped the same ship that takes this off Europewards may bring his orders and our news. But which is it to be? Heads or tails? If it is to be German, I hope they will

deport me; I should prefer it so; I do not think that I could bear a German officialdom, and should probably have to leave *sponte mea*, which is only less picturesque and more expensive.

8*th*.—Mail day. All well, not yet put in prison, whatever may be in store for me. No time even to sign this lame letter.

To J. M. Barrie

Vailima Plantation, Samoan Islands,
November 1st, 1892.

DEAR MR. BARRIE,—I can scarce thank you sufficiently for your extremely amusing letter. No, *The Auld Licht Idyls* never reached me—I wish it had, and I wonder extremely whether it would not be good for me to have a pennyworth of the Auld Licht pulpit. It is a singular thing that I should live here in the South Seas under conditions so new and so striking, and yet my imagination so continually inhabit that cold old huddle of grey hills from which we come. I have just finished *David Balfour;* I have another book on the stocks, *The Young Chevalier*, which is to be part in France and part in Scotland, and to deal with Prince Charlie about the year 1749; and now what have I done but begun a third which is to be all moorland together, and is to have for a centre-piece a figure that I think you will appreciate—that of the immortal Braxfield—Braxfield himself is my *grand premier*, or, since you are so much involved in the British drama, let me say my heavy lead. . . .

Your descriptions of your dealings with Lord Rintoul are frightfully unconscientious. You should never write about anybody until you persuade yourself at least for the moment that you love him, above all anybody on whom your plot revolves. It will always make a hole in the book; and, if he has anything to do with the mechanism,

prove a stick in your machinery. But you know all this better than I do, and it is one of your most promising traits that you do not take your powers too seriously. *The Little Minister* ought to have ended badly; we all know it did; and we are infinitely grateful to you for the grace and good feeling with which you lied about it. If you had told the truth, I for one could never have forgiven you. As you had conceived and written the earlier parts, the truth about the end, though indisputably true to fact, would have been a lie, or what is worse, a discord in art. If you are going to make a book end badly, it must end badly from the beginning. Now your book began to end well. You let yourself fall in love with, and fondle, and smile at your puppets. Once you had done that, your honour was committed—at the cost of truth to life you were bound to save them. It is the blot on *Richard Feverel*, for instance, that it begins to end well; and then tricks you and ends ill. But in that case there is worse behind, for the ill-ending does not inherently issue from the plot—the story *had*, in fact, *ended well* after the great last interview between Richard and Lucy—and the blind, illogical bullet which smashes all has no more to do between the boards than a fly has to do with the room into whose open window it comes buzzing. It *might* have so happened; it needed not; and unless needs must, we have no right to pain our readers. I have had a heavy case of conscience of the same kind about my Braxfield story. Braxfield—only his name is Hermiston—has a son who is condemned to death; plainly, there is a fine tempting fitness about this; and I meant he was to hang. But now on considering my minor characters, I saw there were five people who would—in a sense who must—break prison and attempt his rescue. They were capable, hardy folks, too, who might very well succeed. Why should they not then? Why should not young Hermiston escape clear out of the country? and be happy, if he could, with his—— But soft! I will not betray my secret or my heroine.

Suffice it to breathe in your ear that she was what Hardy calls (and others in their plain way don't) a Pure Woman.[1] Much virtue in a capital letter, such as yours was.

Write to me again in my infinite distance. Tell me about your new book. No harm in telling *me;* I am too far off to be indiscreet; there are too few near me who would care to hear. I am rushes by the riverside, and the stream is in Babylon: breathe your secrets to me fearlessly; and if the Trade Wind caught and carried them away, there are none to catch them nearer than Australia, unless it were the Tropic Birds. In the unavoidable absence of my amanuensis, who is buying eels for dinner, I have thus concluded my dispatch, like St. Paul, with my own hand.

And in the inimitable words of Lord Kames, Faur ye weel, ye bitch.—Yours very truly,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

To E. L. BURLINGAME

Vailima Plantation, Nov. 2nd, 1892.

MY DEAR BURLINGAME,—In the first place, I have to acknowledge receipt of your munificent cheque for three hundred and fifty dollars. Glad you liked the Scott voyage; rather more than I did upon the whole. As the proofs have not turned up at all, there can be no question of returning them, and I am therefore very much pleased to think you have arranged not to wait. The volumes of Adams arrived along with yours of October 6th. One of the dictionaries has also blundered home, apparently from the Colonies; the other is still to seek. I note and sympathise with your bewilderment as to *Falesá.* My own direct correspondence with Mr. Baxter is now about three months in abeyance. Altogether you see how well it would be if you could do anything to wake up the Post

[1] The allusion is to *Tess:* a book R. L. S. did not like.

Office. Not a single copy of the *Footnote* has yet reached Samoa, but I hear of one having come to its address in Hawaii. Glad to hear good news of Stoddard.—Yours sincerely, R. L. STEVENSON.

P.S.—Since the above was written an aftermath of post matter came in, among which were the proofs of *My Grandfather*. I shall correct and return them, but as I have lost all confidence in the Post Office, I shall mention here: first galley, 4th line from the bottom, for "AS" read "OR."

Should I ever again have to use my work without waiting for proofs, bear in mind this golden principle. From a congenital defect, I must suppose, I am unable to write the word OR—wherever I write it the printer unerringly puts AS—and those who read for me had better, wherever it is possible, substitute *or* for *as*. This the more so since many writers have a habit of using *as* which is death to my temper and confusion to my face. R. L. S.

TO LIEUTENANT EELES

The following is addressed to one of Stevenson's best friends among the officers of H.M.S. the *Curaçoa*, which had been for some time on the South Pacific station.

Vailima Plantation, Upolu, Samoan Islands,
November 15th, 1892.

DEAR EELES,—In the first place, excuse me writing to you by another hand, as that is the way in which alone all my correspondence gets effected. Before I took to this method, or rather before I found a victim, it simply didn't get effected.

Thank you again and again, first for your kind thought of writing to me, and second for your extremely amusing and interesting letter. You can have no guess how immediately interesting it was to our family. First of all, the

poor soul at Nukufetau is an old friend of ours, and we have actually treated him ourselves on a former visit to the island. I don't know if Hoskin would approve of our treatment; it consisted, I believe, mostly in a present of stout and a recommendation to put nails in his watertank. We also (as you seem to have done) recommended him to leave the island; and I remember very well how wise and kind we thought his answer. He had half-caste children (he said) who would suffer and perhaps be despised if he carried them elsewhere; if he left them there alone, they would almost certainly miscarry; and the best thing was that he should stay and die with them. But the cream of the fun was your meeting with Buckland. We not only know him, but (as the French say) we don't know anybody else; he is our intimate and adored original; and —prepare your mind—he was, is, and ever will be, TOMMY HADDON![1] As I don't believe you to be inspired, I suspect you to have suspected this. At least it was a mighty happy suspicion. You are quite right: Tommy is really "a good chap," though about as comic as they make them.

I was extremely interested in your Fiji legend, and perhaps even more so in your capital account of the *Curaçoa's* misadventure. Alas! we have nothing so thrilling to relate. All hangs and fools on in this isle of misgovernment, without change, though not without novelty, but wholly without hope, unless perhaps you should consider it hopeful that I am still more immediately threatened with arrest. The confounded thing is, that if it comes off, I shall be sent away in the *Ringarooma* instead of the *Curaçoa*. The former ship burst upon us by the run—she had been sent off by despatch and without orders —and to make me a little more easy in my mind she brought newspapers clamouring for my incarceration. Since then I have had a conversation with the German Consul. He said he had read a review of my Samoa book,

[1] A character in *The Wrecker*.

and if the review were fair, must regard it as an insult, and one that would have to be resented. At the same time, I learn that letters addressed to the German squadron lie for them here in the Post Office. Reports are current of other English ships being on the way—I hope to goodness yours will be among the number. And I gather from one thing and another that there must be a holy row going on between the powers at home, and that the issue (like all else connected with Samoa) is on the knees of the gods. One thing, however, is pretty sure—if that issue prove to be a German protectorate, I shall have to tramp. Can you give us any advice as to a fresh field of energy? We have been searching the atlas, and it seems difficult to fill the bill. How would Rarotonga do? I forget if you have been there. The best of it is that my new house is going up like winking, and I am dictating this letter to the accompaniment of saws and hammers. A hundred black boys and about a score draught oxen perished, or at least barely escaped with their lives, from the mud holes on our road, bringing up the materials. It will be a fine legacy to H.I.G.M.'s protectorate, and doubtless the Governor will take it for his country house.[1] The Ringarooma people, by the way, seem very nice. I liked Stansfield particularly.

Our middy[2] has gone up to San Francisco in pursuit of the phantom Education. We have good word of him, and I hope he will not be in disgrace again, as he was when the hope of the British Navy—need I say that I refer to Admiral Burney?—honoured us last. The next time you come, as the new house will be finished, we shall be able to offer you a bed. Nares and Meiklejohn may like to hear that our new room is to be big enough to dance in. It will be a very pleasant day for me to see the *Curaçoa* in port again and at least a proper contingent of her officers "skipping in my 'all."

[1] Exactly what in the end actually happened.
[2] Austin Strong.

We have just had a feast on my birthday at which we had three of the Ringaroomas, and I wish they had been three Curaçoas—say yourself, Hoskin, and Burney the ever Great. (Consider this an invitation.) Our boys had got the thing up regardless. There were two huge sows—O, brutes of animals that would have broken down a hansom cab—four smaller pigs, two barrels of beef, and a horror of vegetables and fowls. We sat down between forty and fifty in a big new native house behind the kitchen that you have never seen, and ate and public spoke till all was blue. Then we had about half an hour's holiday with some beer and sherry and brandy and soda to re-strengthen the European heart, and then out to the old native house to see a siva. Finally, all the guests were packed off in a trackless black night and down a road that was rather fitted for the *Curaçoa* than any human pedestrian, though to be sure I do not know the draught of the *Curaçoa*. My ladies one and all desire to be particularly remembered to our friends on board, and all look forward, as I do myself, in the hope of your return.—Yours sincerely,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

And let me hear from you again!

To Charles Baxter

The following extract gives a hint of Stevenson's intended management of one of the most difficult points in the plot of *Weir of Hermiston*.

1*st Dec.* '92.

. . . I HAVE a novel on the stocks to be called *The Justice-Clerk*. It is pretty Scotch, the Grand Premier is taken from Braxfield—(Oh, by the by, send me Cockburn's *Memorials*)—and some of the story is—well—queer. The heroine is seduced by one man, and finally disappears with the other man who shot him. . . . Mind you, I expect *The Justice-Clerk* to be my masterpiece. My

Braxfield is already a thing of beauty and a joy for ever, and so far as he has gone *far* my best character.

[*Later.*]—Second thought. I wish Pitcairn's *Criminal Trials quam primum.* Also, an absolutely correct text of the Scots judiciary oath.

Also, in case Pitcairn does not come down late enough, I wish as full a report as possible of a Scotch murder trial between 1790–1820. Understand, *the fullest possible.*

Is there any book which would guide me as to the following facts?

The Justice-Clerk tries some people capitally on circuit. Certain evidence cropping up, the charge is transferred to the J.-C.'s own son. Of course, in the next trial the J.-C. is excluded, and the case is called before the Lord-Justice General.

Where would this trial have to be? I fear in Edinburgh, which would not suit my view. Could it be again at the circuit town? ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

TO SIDNEY COLVIN

[*Nov.* 30, 1892.]

MY DEAR COLVIN,—Another grimy little odd and end of paper, for which you shall be this month repaid in kind, and serve you jolly well right. . . . This is a strange life I live, always on the brink of deportation, men's lives in the scale—and, well, you know my character: if I were to pretend to you that I was not amused, you would justly scorn me. The new house is roofed; it will be a braw house, and what is better, I have my yearly bill in, and I find I can pay for it. For all which mercies, etc. I must have made close on £4,000 this year all told; but, what is not so pleasant, I seem to have come near to spending them. I have been in great alarm, with this new house on the cards, all summer, and came very near to

taking in sail, but I live here so entirely on credit, that I determined to hang on.

Dec. 1*st.*—I was saying yesterday that my life was strange and did not think how well I spoke. Yesterday evening I was briefed to defend a political prisoner before the Deputy Commissioner. What do you think of that for a vicissitude?

Dec. 3*rd.*—Now for a confession. When I heard you and Cassells had decided to print *The Bottle Imp* along with *Falesá*, I was too much disappointed to answer. *The Bottle Imp* was the *pièce de résistance* for my volume, *Island Nights' Entertainments*. However, that volume might have never got done; and I send you two others in case they should be in time.

First have *The Beach of Falesá*.

Then a fresh false title: ISLAND NIGHTS' ENTERTAINMENTS; and then

The Bottle Imp: a cue from an old melodrama.

The Isle of Voices.

The Waif Woman; a cue from a *saga*.

Of course these two others are not up to the mark of *The Bottle Imp;* but they each have a certain merit, and they fit in style. By saying "a cue from an old melodrama" after the *B. I.*, you can get rid of my note. If this is in time, it will be splendid, and will make quite a volume.

Should you and Cassells prefer, you can call the whole volume *I. N. E.*—though the *Beach of Falesá* is the child of a quite different inspiration. They all have a queer realism, even the most extravagant, even the *Isle of Voices;* the manners are exact.

Should they come too late, have them type-written and return to me here the type-written copies.

Sunday, Dec. 4*th.*—3rd start,—But now more humbly and with the aid of an Amanuensis. First one word about page 2. My wife protests against *The Waif Woman* and I am instructed to report the same to you.[1] . . .

[1] This tale was withheld from the volume accordingly.

Dec. 5th.—A horrid alarm rises that our October mail was burned crossing the Plains. If so, you lost a beautiful long letter—I am sure it was beautiful though I remember nothing about it—and I must say I think it serves you properly well. That I should continue writing to you at such length is simply a vicious habit for which I blush. At the same time, please communicate at once with Charles Baxter whether you have or have not received a letter posted here Oct. 12th, as he is going to cable me the fate of my mail.

Now to conclude my news. The German Firm have taken my book like angels, and the result is that Lloyd and I were down there at dinner on Saturday, where we partook of fifteen several dishes and eight distinct forms of intoxicating drink. To the credit of Germany, I must say there was not a shadow of a headache the next morning. I seem to have done as well as my neighbours, for I hear one of the clerks expressed the next morning a gratified surprise that Mr. Stevenson stood his drink so well. It is a strange thing that any race can still find joy in such athletic exercises. I may remark in passing that the mail is due and you have had far more than you deserve. R. L. S.

To Mrs. Fleeming Jenkin

December 5th, 1892.

MY DEAR MRS. JENKIN,—. . . So much said, I come with guilty speed to what more immediately concerns myself. Spare us a month or two for old sake's sake, and make my wife and me happy and proud. We are only fourteen days from San Francisco, just about a month from Liverpool; we have our new house almost finished. The thing *can* be done; I believe we can make you almost comfortable. It is the loveliest climate in the world, our political troubles seem near an end. It can

be done, *it must!* Do, please, make a virtuous effort, come and take a glimpse of a new world I am sure you do not dream of, and some old friends who do often dream of your arrival.

Alas, I was just beginning to get eloquent, and there goes the lunch bell, and after lunch I must make up the mail.

Do come. You must not come in February or March —bad months. From April on it is delightful.—Your sincere friend, ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

TO HENRY JAMES

December 5th, 1892.

MY DEAR JAMES,—How comes it so great a silence has fallen? The still small voice of self-approval whispers me it is not from me. I have looked up my register, and find I have neither written to you nor heard from you since June 22nd, on which day of grace that invaluable work began. This is not as it should be. How to get back? I remember acknowledging with rapture *The Lesson of the Master*, and I remember receiving *Marbot:* was that our last relation?

Hey, well! anyway, as you may have probably gathered from the papers, I have been in devilish hot water, and (what may be new to you) devilish hard at work. In twelve calendar months I finished *The Wrecker*, wrote all of *Falesá* but the first chapter, (well, much of) *The History of Samoa*, did something here and there to my Life of my Grandfather, and began And Finished *David Balfour*. What do you think of it for a year? Since then I may say I have done nothing beyond draft three chapters of another novel, *The Justice-Clerk*, which ought to be a snorter and a blower—at least if it don't make a spoon, it will spoil the horn of an Aurochs (if that's how it should be spelt).

On the hot water side it may entertain you to know that I have been actually sentenced to deportation by my friends on Mulinuu, C. J. Cedercrantz, and Baron Senfft von Pilsach. The awful doom, however, declined to fall, owing to Circumstances over Which. I only heard of it (so to speak) last night. I mean officially, but I had walked among rumours. The whole tale will be some day put into my hand, and I shall share it with humorous friends.

It is likely, however, by my judgment, that this epoch of gaiety in Samoa will soon cease; and the fierce white light of history will beat no longer on Yours Sincerely and his fellows here on the beach. We ask ourselves whether the reason will more rejoice over the end of a disgraceful business, or the unregenerate man more sorrow over the stoppage of the fun. For, say what you please, it has been a deeply interesting time. You don't know what news is, nor what politics, nor what the life of man, till you see it on so small a scale and with your own liberty on the board for stake. I would not have missed it for much. And anxious friends beg me to stay at home and study human nature in Brompton drawing-rooms! *Farceurs!* And anyway you know that such is not my talent. I could never be induced to take the faintest interest in Brompton *qua* Brompton or a drawing-room *qua* a drawing-room. I am an Epick Writer with a k to it, but without the necessary genius.

Hurry up with another book of stories. I am now reduced to two of my contemporaries, you and Barrie—O, and Kipling—you and Barrie and Kipling are now my Muses Three. And with Kipling, as you know, there are reservations to be made. And you and Barrie don't write enough. I should say I also read Anstey when he is serious, and can almost always get a happy day out of Marion Crawford—*ce n'est pas toujours la guerre*, but it's got life to it and guts, and it moves. Did you read the *Witch of Prague?* Nobody could read it twice, of

course ; and the first time even it was necessary to skip. *E pur si muove.* But Barrie is a beauty, the *Little Minister* and the *Window in Thrums*, eh ? Stuff in that young man ; but he must see and not be too funny. Genius in him, but there's a journalist at his elbow—there's the risk. Look, what a page is the glove business in the *Window !* knocks a man flat ; that's guts, if you please.

Why have I wasted the little time that is left with a sort of naked review article ? I don't know, I'm sure. I suppose a mere ebullition of congested literary talk. I am beginning to think a visit from friends would be due. Wish you could come !

Let us have your news anyway, and forgive this silly stale effusion.—Yours ever,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

To J. M. BARRIE

[*Vailima, December* 1892.]

DEAR J. M. BARRIE,—You will be sick of me soon ; I cannot help it. I have been off my work for some time, and re-read the *Edinburgh Eleven*, and had a great mind to write a parody and give you all your sauce back again, and see how you would like it yourself. And then I read (for the first time—I know not how) the *Window in Thrums ;* I don't say that it is better than the *Minister ;* it's less of a tale—and there is a beauty, a material beauty, of the tale *ipse*, which clever critics nowadays long and love to forget ; it has more real flaws ; but somehow it is —well, I read it last anyway, and it's by Barrie. And he's the man for my money. The glove is a great page ; it is startlingly original, and as true as death and judgment. Tibbie Birse in the Burial is great, but I think it was a journalist that got in the word " official." The same character plainly had a word to say to Thomas Haggard. Thomas affects me as a lie—I beg your pardon ; doubtless

he was somebody you knew; that leads people so far astray. The actual is not the true.

I am proud to think you are a Scotchman—though to be sure I know nothing of that country, being only an English tourist, quo' Gavin Ogilvy. I commend the hard case of Mr. Gavin Ogilvy to J. M. Barrie, whose work is to me a source of living pleasure and heartfelt national pride. There are two of us now that the Shirra might have patted on the head. And please do not think when I thus seem to bracket myself with you, that I am wholly blinded with vanity. Jess is beyond my frontier line; I could not touch her skirt; I have no such glamour of twilight on my pen. I am a capable artist; but it begins to look to me as if you were a man of genius. Take care of yourself for my sake. It's a devilish hard thing for a man who writes so many novels as I do, that I should get so few to read. And I can read yours, and I love them.

A pity for you that my amanuensis is not on stock to-day, and my own hand perceptibly worse than usual. —Yours, ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

December 5th, 1892.

P.S.—They tell me your health is not strong. Man, come out here and try the Prophet's chamber. There's only one bad point to us—we do rise early. The Amanuensis states that you are a lover of silence—and that ours is a noisy house—and she is a chatterbox—I am not answerable for these statements, though I do think there is a touch of garrulity about my premises. We have so little to talk about, you see. The house is three miles from town, in the midst of great silent forests. There is a burn close by, and when we are not talking you can hear the burn, and the birds, and the sea breaking on the coast three miles away and six hundred feet below us, and about three times a month a bell—I don't know where the bell is, nor who rings it; it may be the bell in Hans Andersen's story for all I know. It is never hot

here—86 in the shade is about our hottest—and it is never cold except just in the early mornings. Take it for all in all, I suppose this island climate to be by far the healthiest in the world—even the influenza entirely lost its sting. Only two patients died, and one was a man nearly eighty, and the other a child below four months. I won't tell you if it is beautiful, for I want you to come here and see for yourself. Everybody on the premises except my wife has some Scotch blood in their veins—I beg your pardon—except the natives—and then my wife is a Dutchwoman—and the natives are the next thing conceivable to Highlanders before the forty-five. We would have some grand cracks! R. L. S.

Come, it will broaden your mind, and be the making of me.

To Charles Baxter

This correspondent had lately been on a tour in Sweden.

[*Vailima*] *December 28th*, 1892.

my dear charles,—Your really decent letter to hand. And here I am answering it, to the merry note of the carpenter's hammer, in an upper room of the New House. This upper floor is almost done now, but the Grrrrreat 'All below is still unlined; it is all to be varnished red-wood. I paid a big figure but do not repent; the trouble has been so minimised, the work has been so workmanlike, and all the parties have been so obliging. What a pity when you met the Buried Majesty of Sweden—the sovereign of my Cedercrantz—you did not breathe in his ear a word of Samoa!

O Sovereign of my Cedercrantz,
Conceive how his plump carcase pants
To leave the spot he now is tree'd in,
And skip with all the dibbs to Sweden.

O Sovereign of my Cedercrantz,
The lowly plea I now advantz;
Remove this man of light and leadin'
From us to more congenial Sweden.

This kind of thing might be kept up a Lapland night. "Let us bury the great joke"—Shade of Tennyson, forgive!

I am glad to say, you can scarce receive the second bill for the house until next mail, which gives more room to turn round in. Yes, my rate of expenditure is hellish. It is funny, it crept up and up; and when we sat upon one vent another exploded. Lloyd and I grew grey over the monthly returns; but every damned month, there is a new extra. However, we always hope the next will prove less recalcitrant; in which faith we advance trembling.

The desiderated advertisement, I think I have told you, was mighty near supplied: that is, if deportation would suit your view: the ship was actually sought to be hired. Yes, it would have been an advertisement, and rather a lark, and yet a blooming nuisance. For my part, I shall try to do without.

No one has thought fit to send me Atalanta[1]; and I have no proof at all of *D. Balfour*, which is far more serious. How about the *D. B.* map? As soon as there is a proof it were well I should see it to accord the text thereto—or t'other way about if needs must. Remember I had to go much on memory in writing that work. Did you observe the dedication? and how did you like it? If it don't suit you, I am to try my hand again.—Yours ever, R. L. S.

[1] The magazine in which *Catriona* first appeared in this country, under the title *David Balfour*.

XIII

LIFE IN SAMOA—*Continued*

THIRD YEAR AT VAILIMA

January–December 1893

By the New Year of 1893 the fine addition to the house at Vailima was finished, and its pleasantness and comfort went far to console Stevenson for the cost. But the year was on the whole a less fortunate one for the inmates than the last. A proclamation concerning penalties for sedition in the Samoan Islands, which from its tenor could have been aimed at no one else but Stevenson, had been issued at the close of 1892 by the High Commissioner at Fiji; and with its modification and practical withdrawal, by order of the Foreign Office at home, the last threat of unpleasant consequences in connection with his political action disappeared. But a sharp second attack of influenza in January lowered his vitality, and from a trip which the family took for the sake of change to Sydney, in the month of February, they returned with health unimproved. In April the illness of Mrs. Stevenson caused her husband some weeks of acute distress and anxiety. In August he suffered the chagrin of witnessing the outbreak of the war which he had vainly striven to prevent between the two rival kings, and the defeat and banishment of Mataafa, whom he knew to be the one man of governing capacity among the native chiefs, and

whom, in the interest alike of whites and natives, he had desired to see the Powers not crush, but conciliate. On the other hand, he had the satisfaction of seeing the Chief Justice and President removed from the posts they had so incompetently filled, and superseded by new and better men. The task imposed by the three Powers upon these officials was in truth an impossible one ; but their characters and endeavours earned respect, and with the American Chief Justice in particular, Mr. C. J. Ide (whom he had already known as one of the Land Commissioners), and with his family the Vailima household lived on terms of cordial friendship. In September Stevenson took a health-trip to Honolulu, which again turned out unsuccessful. For some weeks he was down with a renewed attack of fever and prostration, and his wife had to come from Samoa to nurse and fetch him home. Later in the autumn he mended again.

During no part of the year were Stevenson's working powers up to the mark. In the early summer he finished *The Ebb Tide*, but on a plan much abridged from its original intention, and with an unusual degree of strain and effort. With *St. Ives* and his own family history he made fair progress, but both of these he regarded as in a manner holiday tasks, not calling for any very serious exercise of his powers. In connection with the latter, he took an eager interest, as his correspondence will show, in the researches which friends and kinsmen undertook for him in Scotland. He fell into arrears in regard to one or two magazine stories for which he had contracted ; and with none of his more ambitious schemes of romance, *Sophia Scarlet*, *The Young Chevalier*, *Heathercat*, and *Weir of Hermiston*, did he feel himself well able to cope. This falling-off of his power of production brought with it no

small degree of inward strain and anxiety. He had not yet put by any provision for his wife and step-family (the income from the moderate fortune left by his father naturally going to his mother during her life). His earnings had since 1887 been considerable, at the rate of £4,000 a year or thereabouts; but his building expenses and large mode of life at Vailima, together with his habitual generosity, which scarce knew check or limit, towards the less fortunate of his friends and acquaintances in various parts of the world, made his expenditure about equal to his income. The idea originally entertained of turning part of the Vailima estate into a profitable plantation turned out chimerical. The thought began to haunt him, What if his power of earning were soon to cease? And occasional signs of inward depression and life-weariness began to appear in his correspondence. But it was only in writing, and then but rarely, that he let such signs appear: to those about him he retained the old affectionate charm and inspiring gaiety undiminished, fulfilling without failure the words of his own prayer, "Give us to awake with smiles, give us to labour smiling; as the sun lightens the world, so let our loving-kindness make bright this house of our habitation."

To Sidney Colvin

[*Vailima*] *January* 1893.

MY DEAR COLVIN,—You are properly paid at last, and it is like you will have but a shadow of a letter. I have been pretty thoroughly out of kilter; first a fever that would neither come on nor go off, then acute dyspepsia, in the weakening grasp of which I get wandering between

the waking state and one of nightmare. Why the devil does no one send me Atalanta? And why are there no proofs of *D. Balfour?* Sure I should have had the whole, at least the half, of them by now; and it would be all for the advantage of the Atalantans. I have written to Cassell & Co. (matter of *Falesá*) "you will please arrange with him" (meaning you). "What he may decide I shall abide." So consider your hand free, and act for me without fear or favour. I am greatly pleased with the illustrations. It is very strange to a South-Seayer to see Hawaiian women dressed like Samoans, but I guess that's all one to you in Middlesex. It's about the same as if London city men were shown going to the Stock Exchange as *pifferari;* but no matter, none will sleep worse for it. I have accepted Cassell's proposal as an amendment to one of mine; that *D. B.* is to be brought out first under the title *Catriona* without pictures; and, when the hour strikes, *Kidnapped* and *Catriona* are to form vols. I. and II. of the heavily illustrated *Adventures of David Balfour* at 7s. 6d. each, sold separately.

——'s letter was vastly sly and dry and shy.[1] I am not afraid now. Two attempts have been made, both have failed, and I imagine these failures strengthen me. Above all this is true of the last, where my weak point was attempted. On every other, I am strong. Only force can dislodge me, for public opinion is wholly on my side. All races and degrees are united in heartfelt opposition to the Men of Mulinuu. The news of the fighting was of no concern to mortal man; it was made much of because men love talk of battles, and because the Government pray God daily for some scandal not their own; but it was only a brisk episode in a clan fight which has grown apparently endemic in the west of Tutuila. At the best it was a twopenny affair, and never occupied my mind five minutes.

[1] The correspondent whose letter I had sent on was a high official at the Foreign Office: the subject, Stevenson and Samoa.

I am so weary of reports that are without foundation and threats that go without fulfilment, and so much occupied besides by the raging troubles of my own wame, that I have been very slack on politics, as I have been in literature. With incredible labour, I have rewritten the First Chapter of the *Justice-Clerk;* it took me about ten days, and requires another athletic dressing after all. And that is my story for the month. The rest is grunting and grutching.

Consideranda for *The Beach*:—

I. Whether to add one or both the tales I sent you?

II. Whether to call the whole volume *Island Nights' Entertainments?*

III. Whether, having waited so long, it would not be better to give me another mail, in case I could add another member to the volume and a little better justify the name?

If I possibly can draw up another story, I will. What annoyed me about the use of *The Bottle Imp* was that I had always meant it for the centre-piece of a volume of *Märchen* which I was slowly to elaborate. You always had an idea that I depreciated the *B. I.;* I can't think wherefore; I always particularly liked it—one of my best works, and ill to equal; and that was why I loved to keep it in portfolio till I had time to grow up to some other fruit of the same *venue.* However, that is disposed of now, and we must just do the best we can.

I am not aware that there is anything to add; the weather is hellish, waterspouts, mists, chills, the foul fiend's own weather, following on a week of expurgated heaven; so it goes at this bewildering season. I write in the upper floor of my new house, of which I will send you some day a plan to measure. 'Tis an elegant structure, surely, and the proid of me oi. Was asked to pay for it just now, and genteelly refused, and then agreed, in view of general good-will, to pay a half of what is still due.

24*th January* 1893.—This ought to have gone last

mail and was forgotten. My best excuse is that I was engaged in starting an influenza, to which class of exploit our household has been since then entirely dedicated. We had eight cases, one of them very bad, and one—mine—complicated with my old friend Bluidy Jack.[1] Luckily neither Fanny, Lloyd, or Belle took the confounded thing, and they were able to run the household and nurse the sick to admiration.

Some of our boys behaved like real trumps. Perhaps the prettiest performance was that of our excellent Henry Simelé, or, as we sometimes call him, Davy Balfour. Henry, I maun premeese, is a chief; the humblest Samoan recoils from emptying slops as you would from cheating at cards; now the last nights of our bad time, when we had seven down together, it was enough to have made anybody laugh or cry to see Henry going the rounds with a slop-bucket and going inside the mosquito net of each of the sick, Protestant and Catholic alike, to pray with them.

I must tell you that in my sickness I had a huge alleviation and began a new story. This I am writing by dictation, and really think it is an art I can manage to acquire. The relief is beyond description; it is just like a school-treat to me, and the amanuensis bears up extraordinar'. The story is to be called *St. Ives;* I give you your choice whether or not it should bear the sub-title, "Experiences of a French prisoner in England." We were just getting on splendidly with it, when this cursed mail arrived and requires to be attended to. It looks to me very like as if *St. Ives* would be ready before any of the others, but you know me and how impossible it is I should predict. The Amanuensis has her head quite turned and believes herself to be the author of this novel (and *is* to some extent)—and as the creature (!) has not been wholly useless in the matter (I told you so! A.M.) I propose to foster her vanity by a little commemoration

[1] Hemorrhage from the lungs.

gift! The name of the hero is Anne de St. Yves—he Englishes his name to St. Ives during his escape. It is my idea to get a ring made which shall either represent *Anne* or A. S. Y. A., of course, would be Amethyst and S. Sapphire, which is my favourite stone anyway and was my father's before me. But what would the ex-Slade professor do about the letter Y? Or suppose he took the other version, how would he meet the case, the two N.'s? These things are beyond my knowledge, which it would perhaps be more descriptive to call ignorance. But I place the matter in the meanwhile under your consideration and beg to hear your views. I shall tell you on some other occasion and when the A.M. is out of hearing how *very* much I propose to invest in this testimonial; but I may as well inform you at once that I intend it to be cheap, sir, damned cheap! My idea of running amanuenses is by praise, not pudding, flattery and not coins! I shall send you when the time is ripe a ring to measure by.

To resume our sad tale. After the other seven were almost wholly recovered Henry lay down to influenza on his own account. He is but just better and it looks as though Fanny were about to bring up the rear. As for me, I am all right, though I *was* reduced to dictating *Anne* in the deaf-and-dumb alphabet, which I think you will admit is a *comble.*

Politics leave me extraordinary cold. It seems that so much of my purpose has come off, and Cedercrantz and Pilsach are sacked. The rest of it has all gone to water. The triple-headed ass at home, in his plenitude of ignorance, prefers to collect the taxes and scatter the Mataafas by force or the threat of force. It may succeed, and I suppose it will. It is none the less for that expensive, harsh, unpopular and unsettling. I am young enough to have been annoyed, and altogether eject and renegate the whole idea of political affairs. Success in that field appears to be the organisation of failure enlivened with defamation of character; and, much as I love pickles and

hot water (in your true phrase) I shall take my pickles in future from Crosse and Blackwell and my hot water with a dose of good Glenlivat.

Do not bother at all about the wall-papers. We have had the whole of our new house varnished, and it looks beautiful. I wish you could see the hall; poor room, it had to begin life as an infirmary during our recent visitation; but it is really a handsome comely place, and when we get the furniture, and the pictures, and what is so very much more decorative, the picture frames, will look sublime.

Jan. 30th.—I have written to Charles asking for Rowlandson's *Syntax* and *Dance of Death* out of our house, and begging for anything about fashions and manners (fashions particularly) for 1814. Can you help? Both the Justice Clerk and St. Ives fall in that fated year. Indeed I got into St. Ives while going over the Annual Register for the other. There is a kind of fancy list of Chaps. of St. Ives. (It begins in Edin^{b} Castle.) I. Story of a lion rampant (that was a toy he had made, and given to a girl visitor). II. Story of a pair of scissors. III. St. Ives receives a bundle of money. IV. St. Ives is shown a house. V. The Escape. VI. The Cottage (Swanston Cottage). VII. The Hen-house. VIII. Three is company and four none. IX. The Drovers. X. The Great North Road. XI. Burchell Fenn. XII. The covered cart. XIII. The doctor. XIV. The Luddites. XV. Set a thief to catch a thief. XVI. M. le Comte de Kérouaille (his uncle, the rich *émigré*, whom he finds murdered). XVII. The cousins. XVIII. Mr. Sergeant Garrow. XIX. A meeting at the Ship, Dover. XX. Diane. XXI. The Duke's Prejudices. XXII. The False Messenger. XXIII. The gardener's ladder. XXIV. The officers. XXV. Trouble with the Duke. XXVI. Fouquet again. XXVII. The Aeronaut. XXVIII. The True-Blooded Yankee. XXIX. In France. I don't know where to stop. Apropos, I want a book about Paris, and the *first return* of the *émigrés* and all up to the

Cent Jours: d'ye ken anything in my way? I want in particular to know about them and the Napoleonic functionaries and officers, and to get the colour and some vital details of the business of exchange of departments from one side to the other.[1] Ten chapters are drafted, and VIII. re-copied by me, but will want another dressing for luck. It is merely a story of adventure, rambling along; but that is perhaps the guard that "sets my genius best," as Alan might have said. I wish I could feel as easy about the other! But there, all novels are a heavy burthen while they are doing, and a sensible disappointment when they are done.

For God's sake, let me have a copy of the new German Samoa White Book. R. L. S.

To Charles Baxter

Telling how the projected tale, *The Pearl Fisher*, had been cut down and in its new form was to be called *The Schooner Farallone* (afterwards changed to *The Ebb Tide*).

[*Vailima, February* 1893.]

MY DEAR CHARLES,—I have had the influenza, as I believe you know: this has been followed by two goes of my old friend Bloodie Jacke, and I have had fefe—the island complaint—for the second time in two months. All this, and the fact that both my womenkind require to see a doctor: and some wish to see Lord Jersey before he goes home: all send me off on a month's holiday to Sydney. I may get my mail: or I may not: depends on freight, weather, and the captain's good-nature—he is one of those who most religiously fear Apia harbour: it is quite a superstition with American captains. (Odd note: American sailors, who make British hair grey by the way they carry canvas, appear to be actually *more* nervous when it comes to coast and harbour work.) This

[1] Vitrolle's *Mémoires* and the "1814" and "1815" of M. Henri Houssaye were sent accordingly.

is the only holiday I have had for more than 2 years ; I dare say it will be as long again before I take another. And I am going to spend a lot of money. Ahem !

On the other hand, you can prepare to dispose of the serial rights of the *Schooner Farallone :* a most grim and gloomy tale. It will run to something between *Jekyll and Hyde* and *Treasure Island.* I will not commit myself beyond this, but I anticipate from 65 to 70,000 words, could almost pledge myself not shorter than 65,000, but won't. The tale can be sent as soon as you have made arrangements ; I hope to finish it in a month ; six weeks, bar the worst accidents, for certain. I should say this is the butt end of what was once *The Pearl Fisher.* There is a peculiarity about this tale in its new form : it ends with a conversion ! We have been tempted rather to call it *The Schooner Farallone : a tract by R. L. S.* and *L. O.* It would make a boss tract ; the three main characters—and there are only four—are barats, insurance frauds, thieves and would-be murderers ; so the company's good. Devil a woman there, by good luck ; so it's " pure." 'Tis a most—what's the expression ?—unconventional work.

R. L. S.

To Sidney Colvin

At Sea, s.s. Mariposa, *Feb.* 19*th,* '93.

MY DEAR COLVIN,—You will see from this heading that I am not dead yet nor likely to be. I was pretty considerably out of sorts, and that is indeed one reason why Fanny, Belle, and I have started out for a month's lark. To be quite exact, I think it will be about five weeks before we get home. We shall stay between two and three in Sydney. Already, though we only sailed yesterday, I am feeling as fit as a fiddle. Fanny ate a whole fowl for breakfast, to say nothing of a tower of hot cakes. Belle and I floored another hen betwixt the pair of us, and I shall be no sooner

done with the present amanuensing racket than I shall put myself outside a pint of Guinness. If you think this looks like dying of consumption in Apia I can only say I differ from you. In the matter of *David*, I have never yet received my proofs at all, but shall certainly wait for your suggestions. Certainly, Chaps. 17 to 20 are the hitch, and I confess I hurried over them with both wings spread. This is doubtless what you complain of. Indeed, I placed my single reliance on Miss Grant. If she couldn't ferry me over, I felt I had to stay there.

About *Island Nights' Entertainments* all you say is highly satisfactory. Go in and win.

The extracts from the Times I really cannot trust myself to comment upon. They were infernally satisfactory; so, and perhaps still more so, was a letter I had at the same time from Lord Pembroke. If I have time as I go through Auckland, I am going to see Sir George Grey.

Now I really think that's all the business. I have been rather sick and have had two small hemorrhages, but the second I believe to have been accidental. No good denying that this annoys, because it do. However, you must expect influenza to leave some harm, and my spirits, appetite, peace on earth and goodwill to men are all on a rising market. During the last week the amanuensis was otherwise engaged, whereupon I took up, pitched into, and about one half demolished another tale, once intended to be called *The Pearl Fisher*, but now razeed and called *The Schooner Farallone*.[1] We had a capital start, the steamer coming in at sunrise, and just giving us time to get our letters ere she sailed again. The manager of the German Firm (O strange, changed days!) danced attendance upon us all morning; his boat conveyed us to and from the steamer.

Feb. 21*st.*—All continues well. Amanuensis bowled over for a day, but afoot again and jolly; Fanny enor-

[1] Ultimately *The Ebb Tide.*

mously bettered by the voyage; I have been as jolly as a sand-boy as usual at sea. The Amanuensis sits opposite to me writing to her offspring. Fanny is on deck. I have just supplied her with the Canadian Pacific Agent, and so left her in good hands. You should hear me at table with the Ulster purser and a little punning microscopist called Davis. Belle does some kind of abstruse Boswellising; after the first meal, having gauged the kind of jests that would pay here, I observed, "Boswell is Barred during this cruise."

23*rd*.—We approach Auckland and I must close my mail. All goes well with the trio. Both the ladies are hanging round a beau—the same—that I unearthed for them: I am general provider, and especially great in the beaux business. I corrected some proofs for Fanny yesterday afternoon, fell asleep over them in the saloon—and the whole ship seems to have been down beholding me. After I woke up, had a hot bath, a whisky punch and a cigarette, and went to bed, and to sleep too, at 8.30; a recrudescence of Vailima hours. Awoke to-day, and had to go to the saloon clock for the hour—no sign of dawn—all heaven grey rainy fog. Have just had breakfast, written up one letter, register and close this.

To Sidney Colvin

Bad pen, bad ink, bad light, bad blotting-paper.

S.S. Mariposa, *at Sea.*
Apia due by daybreak to-morrow, 9 *p.m.* [*March* 1*st*, 1893.]

MY DEAR COLVIN,—Have had an amusing but tragic holiday, from which we return in disarray. Fanny quite sick, but I think slowly and steadily mending; Belle in a terrific state of dentistry troubles which now seem calmed; and myself with a succession of gentle colds out of which I at last succeeded in cooking up a fine pleurisy. By stopping and stewing in a perfectly airless state-room

I seem to have got rid of the pleurisy. Poor Fanny had very little fun of her visit, having been most of the time on a diet of maltine and slops—and this while the rest of us were rioting on oysters and mushrooms. Belle's only devil in the hedge was the dentist. As for me, I was entertained at the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, likewise at a sort of artistic club ; made speeches at both, and may therefore be said to have been, like Saint Paul, all things to all men. I have an account of the latter racket which I meant to have enclosed in this. . . . Had some splendid photos taken, likewise a medallion by a French sculptor ; met Graham, who returned with us as far as Auckland. Have seen a good deal too of Sir George Grey ; what a wonderful old historic figure to be walking on your arm and recalling ancient events and instances ! It makes a man small, and yet the extent to which he approved what I had done—or rather have tried to do—encouraged me. Sir George is an expert at least, he knows these races : he is not a small employé with an ink-pot and a Whitaker.

Take it for all in all, it was huge fun : even Fanny had some lively sport at the beginning ; Belle and I all through. We got Fanny a dress on the sly, gaudy black velvet and Duchesse lace. And alas ! she was only able to wear it once. But we'll hope to see more of it at Samoa ; it really is lovely. Both dames are royally outfitted in silk stockings, etc. We return, as from a raid, with our spoils and our wounded. I am now very dandy : I announced two years ago that I should change. Slovenly youth, all right —not slovenly age. So really now I am pretty spruce ; always a white shirt, white necktie, fresh shave, silk socks, O a great sight !—No more possible. R. L. S.

To Charles Baxter

Of the books mentioned below, *Dr. Syntax's Tour* and Rowlandson's *Dance of Death* had been for use in furnishing customs and

manners in the English part of *St. Ives; Pitcairn* is Pitcairn's *Criminal Trials of Scotland from 1488 to 1624*. As to the name of Stevenson and its adoption by some members of the proscribed clan of Macgregor, Stevenson had been greatly interested by the facts laid before him by his correspondent here mentioned, Mr. Macgregor Stevenson of New York, and had at first delightedly welcomed the idea that his own ancestors might have been fellow-clansmen of Rob Roy. But further correspondence on the subject of his own descent held with a trained genealogist, his namesake Mr. J. Horne Stevenson of Edinburgh, convinced him that the notion must be abandoned.

[*April* 1893.]

. . . ABOUT *The Justice-Clerk*, I long to go at it, but will first try to get a short story done. Since January I have had two severe illnesses, my boy, and some heart-breaking anxiety over Fanny; and am only now convalescing. I came down to dinner last night for the first time, and that only because the service had broken down, and to relieve an inexperienced servant. Nearly four months now I have rested my brains; and if it be true that rest is good for brains, I ought to be able to pitch in like a giant refreshed. Before the autumn, I hope to send you some *Justice-Clerk*, or *Weir of Hermiston*, as Colvin seems to prefer; I own to indecision. Received *Syntax*, *Dance of Death*, and *Pitcairn*, which last I have read from end to end since its arrival, with vast improvement. What a pity it stops so soon! I wonder is there nothing that seems to prolong the series? Why doesn't some young man take it up? How about my old friend Fountainhall's *Decisions?* I remember as a boy that there was some good reading there. Perhaps you could borrow me that, and send it on loan; and perhaps Laing's *Memorials* therewith; and a work I'm ashamed to say I have never read, *Balfour's Letters*. . . . I have come by accident, through a correspondent, on one very curious and interesting fact—namely, that Stevenson was one of the names adopted by the Macgregors at the proscription. The details supplied by my correspondent are both convincing and amusing; but it would be highly interesting to find out more of this. R. L. S.

To Sidney Colvin

These notes are in reply to a set of queries and suggestions as to points that seemed to need clearing in the tale of *Catriona,* as first published in Atalanta under the title *David Balfour.*

[*Vailima*] *April* 1893.

1. *Slip* 3. Davie would be *attracted* into a similar dialect, as he is later—*e.g.* with Doig, chapter xix. This is truly Scottish.

4, *to lightly;* correct; "to lightly" is a good regular Scots verb.

15. See Allan Ramsay's works.

15, 16. Ay, and that is one of the pigments with which I am trying to draw the character of Prestongrange. 'Tis a most curious thing to render that kind, insignificant mask. To make anything precise is to risk my effect. And till the day he died, Davie was never sure of what P. was after. Not only so; very often P. didn't know himself. There was an element of mere liking for Davie; there was an element of being determined, in case of accidents, to keep well with him. He hoped his Barbara would bring him to her feet, besides, and make him manageable. That was why he sent him to Hope Park with them. But Davie cannot *know;* I give you the inside of Davie, and my method condemns me to give only the outside both of Prestongrange and his policy.

– – I'll give my mind to the technicalities. Yet to me they seem a part of the story, which is historical, after all.

– – I think they wanted Alan to escape. But when or where to say so? I will try.

– – 20, *Dean.* I'll try and make that plainer.

Chap. xiii., I fear it has to go without blows. If I could get the pair—No, can't be.

– – xiv. All right, will abridge.

– – xv. I'd have to put a note to every word; and he who can't read Scots can *never* enjoy Tod Lapraik.

– – XVII. Quite right. I *can* make this plainer, and will.

– – XVIII. I know, but I have to hurry here; this is the broken back of my story; some business briefly transacted, I am leaping for Barbara's apron-strings.

Slip 57. Quite right again; I shall make it plain.

Chap. XX. I shall make all these points clear. About Lady Prestongrange (not *Lady* Grant, only *Miss* Grant, my dear, though *Lady* Prestongrange, quoth the dominie) I am taken with your idea of her death, and have a good mind to substitute a featureless aunt.

Slip 78. I don't see how to lessen this effect. There is really not much said of it; and I know Catriona did it. But I'll try.

– – 89. I know. This is an old puzzle of mine. You see C.'s dialect is not wholly a bed of roses. If only I knew the Gaelic. Well, I'll try for another expression.

The end. I shall try to work it over. James was at Dunkirk ordering post-horses for his own retreat. Catriona did have her suspicions aroused by the letter, and careless gentleman, I told you so—or she did at least.—Yes, the blood money.—I am bothered about the portmanteau; it is the presence of Catriona that bothers me; the rape of the pockmantie is historic. . . .

To me, I own, it seems in the proof a very pretty piece of workmanship. David himself I refuse to discuss; he *is*. The Lord Advocate I think a strong sketch of a very difficult character, James More, sufficient; and the two girls very pleasing creatures. But O dear me, I came near losing my heart to Barbara! I am not quite so constant as David, and even he—well, he didn't know it, anyway! *Tod Lapraik* is a piece of living Scots: if I had never writ anything but that and *Thrawn Janet*, still I'd have been a writer. The defects of *D. B.* are inherent, I fear. But on the whole, I am far indeed from being displeased with the tailie. One thing is sure, there has been no such drawing of Scots character since Scott;

and even he never drew a full length like Davie, with his shrewdness and simplicity, and stockishness and charm. Yet, you'll see, the public won't want it; they want more Alan! Well, they can't get it. And readers of *Tess* can have no use for my David, and his innocent but real love affairs.

I found my fame much grown on this return to civilisation. *Digito monstrari* is a new experience; people all looked at me in the streets in Sydney; and it was very queer. Here, of course, I am only the white chief in the Great House to the natives; and to the whites, either an ally or a foe. It is a much healthier state of matters. If I lived in an atmosphere of adulation, I should end by kicking against the pricks. O my beautiful forest, O my beautiful shining, windy house, what a joy it was to behold them again! No chance to take myself too seriously here.

The difficulty of the end is the mass of matter to be attended to, and the small time left to transact it in. I mean from Alan's danger of arrest. But I have just seen my way out, I do believe.

Easter Sunday.—I have now got as far as slip 28, and finished the chapter of the law technicalities. Well, these seemed to me always of the essence of the story, which is the story of a *cause célèbre;* moreover, they are the justification of my inventions; if these men went so far (granting Davie sprung on them) would they not have gone so much further? But of course I knew they were a difficulty; determined to carry them through in a conversation; approached this (it seems) with cowardly anxiety; and filled it with gabble, sir, gabble. I have left all my facts, but have removed 42 lines. I should not wonder but what I'll end by re-writing it. It is not the technicalities that shocked you, it was my bad art. It is very strange that x. should be so good a chapter and ix. and xi. so uncompromisingly bad. It looks as if xi. also would have to be re-formed. If x. had not cheered me up, I should be in doleful dumps, but x. is alive anyway, and life is all in all.

Thursday, April 5th.—Well, there's no disguise possible ; Fanny is not well, and we are miserably anxious. . . .

Friday, 7th.—I am thankful to say the new medicine relieved her at once. A crape has been removed from the day for all of us. To make things better, the morning is ah ! such a morning as you have never seen ; heaven upon earth for sweetness, freshness, depth upon depth of unimaginable colour, and a huge silence broken at this moment only by the far-away murmur of the Pacific and the rich piping of a single bird. You can't conceive what a relief this is ; it seems a new world. She has such extraordinary recuperative power that I do hope for the best. I am as tired as man can be. This is a great trial to a family, and I thank God it seems as if ours was going to bear it well. And O ! if it only lets up, it will be but a pleasant memory. We are all seedy, bar Lloyd : Fanny, as per above ; self nearly extinct ; Belle, utterly overworked and bad toothache ; Cook, down with a bad foot ; Butler, prostrate with a bad leg. Eh, what a faim'ly !

Sunday.—Grey heaven, raining torrents of rain ; occasional thunder and lightning. Everything to dispirit ; but my invalids are really on the mend. The rain roars like the sea ; in the sound of it there is a strange and ominous suggestion of an approaching tramp ; something nameless and measureless seems to draw near, and strikes me cold, and yet is welcome. I lie quiet in bed to-day, and think of the universe with a good deal of equanimity. I have, at this moment, but the one objection to it ; the *fracas* with which it proceeds. I do not love noise ; I am like my grandfather in that ; and so many years in these still islands has ingrained the sentiment perhaps. Here are no trains, only men pacing barefoot. No cars or carriages ; at worst the rattle of a horse's shoes among the rocks. Beautiful silence ; and so soon as this robustious rain takes off, I am to drink of it again by oceanfuls.

April 16th.—Several pages of this letter destroyed as beneath scorn ; the wailings of a crushed worm ; matter

in which neither you nor I can take stock. Fanny is distinctly better, I believe all right now; I too am mending, though I have suffered from crushed wormery, which is not good for the body, and damnation to the soul. I feel to-night a baseless anxiety to write a lovely poem *à propos des bottes de ma grand'mère, qui etaient à revers.* I see I am idiotic. I'll try the poem.

17*th.*—The poem did not get beyond plovers and lovers. I am still, however, harassed by the unauthentic Muse; if I cared to encourage her—but I have not the time, and anyway we are at the vernal equinox. It is funny enough, but my pottering verses are usually made (like the God-gifted organ voice's) at the autumnal; and this seems to hold at the Antipodes. There is here some odd secret of Nature. I cannot speak of politics; we wait and wonder. It seems (this is partly a guess) Ide won't take the C. J. ship, unless the islands are disarmed; and that England hesitates and holds off. By my own idea, strongly corroborated by Sir George, I am writing no more letters. But I have put as many irons in against this folly of the disarming as I could manage. It did not reach my ears till nearly too late. What a risk to take! What an expense to incur! And for how poor a gain! Apart from the treachery of it. My dear fellow, politics is a vile and a bungling business. I used to think meanly of the plumber; but how he shines beside the politician!

Thursday.—A general, steady advance; Fanny really quite chipper and jolly—self on the rapid mend, and with my eye on *forests* that are to fall—and my finger on the axe, which wants stoning.

Saturday, 22.—Still all for the best; but I am having a heartbreaking time over *David.* I have nearly all corrected. But have to consider *The Heather on Fire, The Wood by Silvermills*, and the last chapter. They all seem to me off colour; and I am not fit to better them yet. No proof has been sent of the title, contents, or dedication.

To A. Conan Doyle

The reference in the postscript here is, I believe, to the Journals of the Society for Psychical Research.

Vailima, Apia, Samoa, April 5th, 1893.

DEAR SIR,—You have taken many occasions to make yourself very agreeable to me, for which I might in decency have thanked you earlier. It is now my turn ; and I hope you will allow me to offer you my compliments on your very ingenious and very interesting adventures of Sherlock Holmes. That is the class of literature that I like when I have the toothache. As a matter of fact, it was a pleurisy I was enjoying when I took the volume up ; and it will interest you as a medical man to know that the cure was for the moment effectual. Only the one thing troubles me ; can this be my old friend Joe Bell ? —I am, yours very truly,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

P.S.—And lo, here is your address supplied me here in Samoa ! But do not take mine, O frolic fellow Spookist, from the same source ; mine is wrong. R. L. S.

To Sidney Colvin

The outbreak of hostilities was at this date imminent between Mulinuu (the party of Laupepa, recognised and supported by the Three Powers) and Malie (the party of Mataafa).

[*Vailima*] 25*th April* [1893].

MY DEAR COLVIN,—To-day early I sent down to Maben (Secretary of State) an offer to bring up people from Malie, keep them in my house, and bring them down day by day for so long as the negotiation should last. I have a favourable answer so far. This I would not have tried, had not old Sir George Grey put me on my mettle ; " Never

despair," was his word ; and " I am one of the few people who have lived long enough to see how true that is." Well, thereupon I plunged in ; and the thing may do me great harm, but yet I do not think so—for I think jealousy will prevent the trial being made. And at any rate it is another chance for this distracted archipelago of children, sat upon by a clique of fools. If, by the gift of God, I can do—I am allowed to try to do—and succeed : but no, the prospect is too bright to be entertained.

To-day we had a ride down to Tanugamanono, and then by the new wood paths. One led us to a beautiful clearing, with four native houses ; taro, yams, and the like, excellently planted, and old Folau—" the Samoan Jew " —sitting and whistling there in his new-found and well-deserved well-being. It was a good sight to see a Samoan thus before the world. Further up, on our way home, we saw the world clear, and the wide die of the shadow lying broad ; we came but a little further, and found in the borders of the bush a banyan. It must have been 150 feet in height ; the trunk, and its acolytes, occupied a great space ; above that, in the peaks of the branches, quite a forest of ferns and orchids were set ; and over all again the huge spread of the boughs rose against the bright west, and sent their shadow miles to the eastward. I have not often seen anything more satisfying than this vast vegetable.

Sunday.—A heavenly day again ! the world all dead silence, save when, from far down below us in the woods, comes up the crepitation of the little wooden drum that beats to church. Scarce a leaf stirs ; only now and again a great, cool gush of air that makes my papers fly, and is gone.—The king of Samoa has refused my intercession between him and Mataafa ; and I do not deny this is a good riddance to me of a difficult business, in which I might very well have failed. What else is to be done for these silly folks ?

May 12th.—And this is where I had got to, before the

mail arrives with, I must say, a real gentlemanly letter from yourself. Sir, that is the sort of letter I want! Now, I'll make my little proposal.[1] I will accept *Child's Play* and *Pan's Pipes*. Then I want *Pastoral*, *The Manse*, *The Islet*, leaving out if you like all the prefacial matter and beginning at I. Then the portrait of Robert Hunter, beginning "Whether he was originally big or little," and ending "fearless and gentle." So much for *Mem. and Portraits*. *Beggars*, sections I. and II., *Random Memories* II., and *Lantern Bearers;* I'm agreeable. These are my selections. I don't know about *Pulvis et Umbra* either, but must leave that to you. But just what you please.

About *Davie* I elaborately wrote last time, but still *Davie* is not done; I am grinding singly at *The Ebb Tide*, as we now call the *Farallone;* the most of it will go this mail. About the following, let there be no mistake: I will not write the abstract of *Kidnapped;* write it who will, I will not. Boccaccio must have been a clever fellow to write both argument and story; I am not, *et je me récuse*.

We call it *The Ebb Tide: a Trio and Quartette;* but that secondary name you may strike out if it seems dull to you. The book, however, falls in two halves, when the fourth character appears. I am on p. 82 if you want to know, and expect to finish on I suppose 110 or so; but it goes slowly, as you may judge from the fact that this three weeks past, I have only struggled from p. 58 to p. 82: twenty-four pages, *et encore* sure to be re-written, in twenty-one days. This is no prize-taker; not much Waverley Novels about this!

May 16*th*.—I believe it will be ten chapters of *The Ebb Tide* that go to you; the whole thing should be completed in I fancy twelve; and the end will follow punctually next mail. It is my great wish that this might get into The Illustrated London News for Gordon Browne to illustrate. For whom, in case he should get

[1] For a volume of selected *Essays*, containing the pick of *Virginibus Puerisque*, *Memories and Portraits*, and *Across the Plains*.

the job, I give you a few notes. A purao is a tree giving something like a fig with flowers. He will find some photographs of an old marine curiosity shop in my collection, which may help him. Attwater's settlement is to be entirely overshadowed everywhere by tall palms; see photographs of Fakarava: the verandahs of the house are 12 ft. wide. Don't let him forget the Figure Head, for which I have a great use in the last chapter. It stands just clear of the palms on the crest of the beach at the head of the pier; the flag-staff not far off; the pier he will understand is perhaps three feet above high water, not more at any price. The sailors of the *Farallone* are to be dressed like white sailors of course. For other things, I remit this excellent artist to my photographs.

I can't think what to say about the tale, but it seems to me to go off with a considerable bang; in fact, to be an extraordinary work: but whether popular! Attwater is a no end of a courageous attempt, I think you will admit; how far successful is another affair. If my island ain't a thing of beauty, I'll be damned. Please observe Wiseman and Wishart; for incidental grimness, they strike me as in it. Also, kindly observe the Captain and *Adar;* I think that knocks spots. In short, as you see, I'm a trifle vainglorious. But O, it has been such a grind! The devil himself would allow a man to brag a little after such a crucifixion! And indeed I'm only bragging for a change before I return to the darned thing lying waiting for me on p. 88, where I last broke down. I break down at every paragraph, I may observe; and lie here and sweat, till I can get one sentence wrung out after another. Strange doom; after having worked so easily for so long! Did ever anybody see such a story of four characters?

Later, 2.30.—It may interest you to know that I am entirely *tapu*, and live apart in my chambers like a caged beast. Lloyd has a bad cold, and Graham and Belle are getting it. Accordingly, I dwell here without the light

of any human countenance or voice, and strap away at *The Ebb Tide* until (as now) I can no more. Fanny can still come, but is gone to glory now, or to her garden. Page 88 is done, and must be done over again to-morrow, and I confess myself exhausted. Pity a man who can't work on along when he has nothing else on earth to do! But I have ordered Jack, and am going for a ride in the bush presently to refresh the machine; then back to a lonely dinner and durance vile. I acquiesce in this hand of fate; for I think another cold just now would just about do for me. I have scarce yet recovered the two last.

May 18th.—My progress is crabwise, and I fear only IX. chapters will be ready for the mail. I am on p. 88 again, and with half an idea of going back again to 85. We shall see when we come to read: I used to regard reading as a pleasure in my old light days. All the house are down with the iffluenza in a body, except Fanny and me. The Iffluenza appears to become endemic here, but it has always been a scourge in the islands. Witness the beginning of *The Ebb Tide*, which was observed long before the Iffle had distinguished himself at home by such Napoleonic conquests. I am now of course "quite a recluse," and it is very stale, and there is no amanuensis to carry me over my mail, to which I shall have to devote many hours that would have been more usefully devoted to *The Ebb Tide*. For you know you can dictate at all hours of the day and at any odd moment; but to sit down and write with your red right hand is a very different matter.

May 20th.—Well, I believe I've about finished the thing, I mean as far as the mail is to take it. Chapter X. is now in Lloyd's hands for remarks, and extends in its present form to p. 93 incl. On the 12th of May, I see by looking back, I was on p. 82, not for the first time; so that I have made 11 pages in nine livelong days. Well! up a high hill he heaved a huge round stone. But this

Flaubert business must be resisted in the premises. Or is it the result of iffluenza? God forbid. Fanny is down now, and the last link that bound me to my fellow men is severed. I sit up here, and write, and read Renan's *Origines*, which is certainly devilish interesting; I read his Nero yesterday, it is very good, O, very good! But he is quite a Michelet; the general views, and such a piece of character painting, excellent; but his method sheer lunacy. You can see him take up the block which he had just rejected, and make of it the corner-stone: a maddening way to deal with authorities; and the result so little like history that one almost blames oneself for wasting time. But the time is not wasted; the conspectus is always good, and the blur that remains on the mind is probably just enough. I have been enchanted with the unveiling of Revelations. Grigsby! what a lark! And how picturesque that return of the false Nero! The Apostle John is rather discredited. And to think how one had read the thing so often, and never understood the attacks upon St. Paul! I remember when I was a child, and we came to the Four Beasts that were all over eyes, the sickening terror with which I was filled. If that was Heaven, what, in the name of Davy Jones and the aboriginal night-mare, could Hell be? Take it for all in all, *L'Antéchrist* is worth reading. The *Histoire d'Israël* did not surprise me much; I had read those Hebrew sources with more intelligence than the New Testament, and was quite prepared to admire Ahab and Jezebel, etc. Indeed, Ahab has always been rather a hero of mine; I mean since the years of discretion.

May 21st.—And here I am back again on p. 85! the last chapter demanding an entire revision, which accordingly it is to get. And where my mail is to come in, God knows! This forced, violent, alembicated style is most abhorrent to me; it can't be helped; the note was struck years ago on the *Janet Nicoll*, and has to be maintained

somehow; and I can only hope the intrinsic horror and pathos, and a kind of fierce glow of colour there is to it, and the surely remarkable wealth of striking incident, may guide our little shallop into port. If Gordon Browne is to get it, he should see the Brassey photographs of Papeete. But mind, the three waifs were never in the town; only on the beach and in the calaboose. By George, but it's a good thing to illustrate for a man like that! Fanny is all right again. False alarm! I was down yesterday afternoon at Papauta, and heard much growling of war, and the delightful news that the C. J. and the President are going to run away from Mulinuu and take refuge in the Tivoli hotel.

23*rd*. *Mail day.—The Ebb Tide*, all but (I take it) fifteen pages, is now in your hands—possibly only about eleven pp. It is hard to say. But there it is, and you can do your best with it. Personally, I believe I would in this case make even a sacrifice to get Gordon Browne and copious illustration. I guess in ten days I shall have finished with it; then I go next to *D. Balfour*, and get the proofs ready: a nasty job for me, as you know. And then? Well, perhaps I'll take a go at the family history. I think that will be wise, as I am so much off work. And then, I suppose, *Weir of Hermiston*, but it may be anything. I am discontented with *The Ebb Tide*, naturally; there seems such a veil of words over it; and I like more and more naked writing; and yet sometimes one has a longing for full colour and there comes the veil again. *The Young Chevalier* is in very full colour, and I fear it for that reason.—Ever, R. L. S.

To S. R. Crockett

Glencorse Church in the Pentlands, mentioned by Stevenson with so much emotion in the course of this letter, served him for the

scene of Chapter VI. in *Weir of Hermiston*, where his old associations and feelings in connection with the place have so admirably inspired him.

Vailima, Samoa, May 17th, 1893.

DEAR MR. CROCKETT,—I do not owe you two letters, nor yet nearly one, sir! The last time I heard of you, you wrote about an accident, and I sent you a letter to my lawyer, Charles Baxter, which does not seem to have been presented, as I see nothing of it in his accounts. Query, was that lost? I should not like you to think I had been so unmannerly and so inhuman. If you have written since, your letter also has miscarried, as is much the rule in this part of the world, unless you register.

Your book is not yet to hand, but will probably follow next month. I detected you early in the Bookman, which I usually see, and noted you in particular as displaying a monstrous ingratitude about the footnote. Well, mankind is ungrateful; "Man's ingratitude to man makes countless thousands mourn," quo' Rab—or words to that effect. By the way, an anecdote of a cautious sailor: "Bill, Bill," says I to him, "*or words to that effect.*"

I shall never take that walk by the Fisher's Tryst and Glencorse. I shall never see Auld Reekie. I shall never set my foot again upon the heather. Here I am until I die, and here will I be buried. The word is out and the doom written. Or, if I do come, it will be a voyage to a further goal, and in fact a suicide; which, however, if I could get my family all fixed up in the money way, I might, perhaps, perform, or attempt. But there is a plaguey risk of breaking down by the way; and I believe I shall stay here until the end comes like a good boy, as I am. If I did it, I should put upon my trunks: "Passenger to—Hades."

How strangely wrong your information is! In the first place, I should never carry a novel to Sydney; I should post it from here. In the second place, *Weir of Hermiston* is as yet scarce begun. It's going to be excel-

lent, no doubt; but it consists of about twenty pages. I have a tale, a shortish tale in length, but it has proved long to do, *The Ebb Tide*, some part of which goes home this mail. It is by me and Mr. Osbourne, and is really a singular work. There are only four characters, and three of them are bandits—well, two of them are, and the third is their comrade and accomplice. It sounds cheering, doesn't it? Barratry, and drunkenness, and vitriol, and I cannot tell you all what, are the beams of the roof. And yet—I don't know—I sort of think there's something in it. You'll see (which is more than I ever can) whether Davis and Attwater come off or not.

Weir of Hermiston is a much greater undertaking, and the plot is not good, I fear; but Lord Justice-Clerk Hermiston ought to be a plum. Of other schemes, more or less executed, it skills not to speak.

I am glad to hear so good an account of your activity and interests, and shall always hear from you with pleasure; though I am, and must continue, a mere sprite of the inkbottle, unseen in the flesh. Please remember me to your wife and to the four-year-old sweetheart, if she be not too engrossed with higher matters. Do you know where the road crosses the burn under Glencorse Church? Go there, and say a prayer for me: *morituri salutat.* See that it's a sunny day; I would like it to be a Sunday, but that's not possible in the premises; and stand on the right-hand bank just where the road goes down into the water, and shut your eyes, and if I don't appear to you! well, it can't be helped, and will be extremely funny.

I have no concern here but to work and to keep an eye on this distracted people. I live just now wholly alone in an upper room of my house, because the whole family are down with influenza, bar my wife and myself. I get my horse up sometimes in the afternoon and have a ride in the woods; and I sit here and smoke and write, and rewrite, and destroy, and rage at my own impotence,

from six in the morning till eight at night, with trifling and not always agreeable intervals for meals.

I am sure you chose wisely to keep your country charge. There a minister can be something, not in a town. In a town, the most of them are empty houses—and public speakers. Why should you suppose your book will be slated because you have no friends? A new writer, if he is any good, will be acclaimed generally with more noise than he deserves. But by this time you will know for certain.—I am, yours sincerely,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

P.S.—Be it known to this fluent generation that I, R. L. S., in the forty-third of my age and the twentieth of my professional life, wrote twenty-four pages in twenty-one days, working from six to eleven, and again in the afternoon from two to four or so, without fail or interruption. Such are the gifts the gods have endowed us withal: such was the facility of this prolific writer!

R. L. S.

To AUGUSTUS ST. GAUDENS

Vailima, Samoa, May 29th, 1893.

MY DEAR GOD-LIKE SCULPTOR,—I wish in the most delicate manner in the world to insinuate a few commissions:—

No. 1. Is for a couple of copies of my medallion, as gilt-edged and high-toned as it is possible to make them. One is for our house here, and should be addressed as above. The other is for my friend Sidney Colvin, and should be addressed—Sidney Colvin, Esq., Keeper of the Print Room, British Museum, London.

No. 2. This is a rather large order, and demands some explanation. Our house is lined with varnished wood of a dark ruddy colour, very beautiful to see; at the same

time, it calls very much for gold; there is a limit to picture frames, and really you know there has to be a limit to the pictures you put inside of them. Accordingly, we have had an idea of a certain kind of decoration, which, I think, you might help us to make practical. What we want is an alphabet of gilt letters (very much such as people play with), and all mounted on spikes like drawing-pins; say two spikes to each letter, one at top, and one at bottom. Say that they were this height, I and that you chose a model of some really exquisitely fine, clear type from some Roman monument, and that they were made either of metal or some composition gilt —the point is, could not you, in your land of wooden houses, get a manufacturer to take the idea and manufacture them at a venture, so that I could get two or three hundred pieces or so at a moderate figure? You see, suppose you entertain an honoured guest, when he goes he leaves his name in gilt letters on your walls; an infinity of fun and decoration can be got out of hospitable and festive mottoes; and the doors of every room can be beautified by the legend of their names. I really think there is something in the idea, and you might be able to push it with the brutal and licentious manufacturer, using my name if necessary, though I should think the name of the god-like sculptor would be more germane. In case you should get it started, I should tell you that we should require commas in order to write the Samoan language, which is full of words written thus: la'u, ti'e ti'e. As the Samoan language uses but a very small proportion of the consonants, we should require a double or treble stock of all vowels, and of F, G, L, U, N, P, S, T, and V.

The other day in Sydney, I think you might be interested to hear, I was sculpt a second time by a man called ——, as well as I can remember and read. I mustn't criticise a present, and he had very little time to do it

in. It is thought by my family to be an excellent likeness of Mark Twain. This poor fellow, by the by, met with the devil of an accident. A model of a statue which he had just finished with a desperate effort was smashed to smithereens on its way to exhibition.

Please be sure and let me know if anything is likely to come of this letter business, and the exact cost of each letter, so that I may count the cost before ordering.—Yours sincerely, ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

TO SIDNEY COLVIN

Relating the toilsome completion of *The Ebb Tide*, and beginning of the account of his grandfather, Robert Stevenson, in *History of a Family of Engineers*.

[*Vailima*] 29*th May* [1893].

MY DEAR COLVIN,—Still grinding at Chap. XI. I began many days ago on p. 93, and am still on p. 93, which is exhilarating, but the thing takes shape all the same and should make a pretty lively chapter for an end of it. For XII. is only a footnote *ad explicandum*.

June the 1*st*.—Back on p. 93. I was on 100 yesterday, but read it over and condemned it.

10 *a.m.*—I have worked up again to 97, but how? The deuce fly away with literature, for the basest sport in creation. But it's got to come straight! and if possible, so that I may finish *D. Balfour* in time for the same mail. What a getting upstairs! This is Flaubert outdone. Belle, Graham, and Lloyd leave to-day on a malaga down the coast; to be absent a week or so: this leaves Fanny, me, and ——, who seems a nice, kindly fellow.

June 2*nd*.—I am nearly dead with dyspepsia, oversmoking, and unremunerative overwork. Last night, I went to bed by seven; woke up again about ten for a minute to find myself light-headed and altogether off my legs; went to sleep again, and woke this morning fairly

fit. I have crippled on to p. 101, but I haven't read it yet, so do not boast. What kills me is the frame of mind of one of the characters; I cannot get it through. Of course that does not interfere with my total inability to write; so that yesterday I was a living half-hour upon a single clause and have a gallery of variants that would surprise you. And this sort of trouble (which I cannot avoid) unfortunately produces nothing when done but alembication and the far-fetched. Well, read it with mercy!

8 *a.m.*—Going to bed. Have read it, and believe the chapter practically done at last. But Lord! it has been a business.

June 3*rd*, 8.15.—The draft is finished, the end of Chapter XII. and the tale, and I have only eight pages *wiederzuarbeiten*. This is just a cry of joy in passing.

10.30.—Knocked out of time. Did 101 and 102. Alas, no more to-day, as I have to go down town to a meeting. Just as well though, as my thumb is about done up.

Sunday, June 4th.—Now for a little snippet of my life. Yesterday, 12.30, in a heavenly day of sun and trade, I mounted my horse and set off. A boy opens my gate for me. "Sleep and long life! A blessing on your journey," says he. And I reply "Sleep, long life! A blessing on the house!" Then on, down the lime lane, a rugged, narrow, winding way, that seems almost as if it was leading you into Lyonesse, and you might see the head and shoulders of a giant looking in. At the corner of the road I meet the inspector of taxes, and hold a diplomatic interview with him; he wants me to pay taxes on the new house; I am informed I should not till next year; and we part, *re infecta*, he promising to bring me decisions, I assuring him that, if I find any favouritism, he will find me the most recalcitrant taxpayer on the island. Then I have a talk with an old servant by the wayside. A little further I pass two children coming up. "Love!" say I; "are you two

chiefly-proceeding inland ?" and they say, "Love ! yes !" and the interesting ceremony is finished. Down to the post office, where I find Vitrolles and (Heaven reward you !) the White Book, just arrived per *Upolu*, having gone the wrong way round, by Australia ; also six copies of *Island Nights' Entertainments*. Some of Weatherall's illustrations are very clever ; but O Lord ! the lagoon ! I did say it was "shallow," but, O dear, not so shallow as that a man could stand up in it ! I had still an hour to wait for my meeting, so Postmaster Davis let me sit down in his room and I had a bottle of beer in, and read *A Gentleman of France*. Have you seen it coming out in Longman's ? My dear Colvin ! 'tis the most exquisite pleasure ; a real chivalrous yarn, like the Dumas' and yet unlike. Thereafter to the meeting of the five newspaper proprietors. Business transacted, I have to gallop home and find the boys waiting to be paid at the doorstep.

Monday, 5th.—Yesterday, Sunday, the Rev. Dr. Brown, secretary to the Wesleyan Mission, and the man who made the war in the Western Islands and was tried for his life in Fiji, came up, and we had a long, important talk about Samoa. O, if I could only talk to the home men ! But what would it matter ? none of them know, none of them care. If we could only have Macgregor here with his schooner, you would hear of no more troubles in Samoa. That is what we want ; a man that knows and likes the natives, *qui paye de sa personne*, and is not afraid of hanging when necessary. We don't want bland Swedish humbugs, and fussy, footering German barons. That way the maelstrom lies, and we shall soon be in it.

I have to-day written 103 and 104, all perfectly wrong, and shall have to rewrite them. This tale is devilish, and Chapter XI. the worst of the lot. The truth is of course that I am wholly worked out ; but it's nearly done, and shall go somehow according to promise. I go

against all my gods, and say it is *not worth while* to massacre yourself over the last few pages of a rancid yarn, that the reviewers will quite justly tear to bits. As for *D. B.*, no hope, I fear, this mail, but we'll see what the afternoon does for me.

4.15.—Well, it's done. Those tragic 16 pp. are at last finished, and I have put away thirty-two pages of chips, and have spent thirteen days about as nearly in Hell as a man could expect to live through. It's done, and of course it ain't worth while, and who cares? There it is, and about as grim a tale as was ever written, and as grimy, and as hateful.

SACRED
TO THE MEMORY
OF
J. L. HUISH,
BORN 1856, AT HACKNEY,
LONDON,
Accidentally killed upon this
Island,
10th September 1889.

Tuesday, 6th.—I am exulting to do nothing. It pours with rain from the westward, very unusual kind of weather; I was standing out on the little verandah in front of my room this morning, and there went through me or over me a wave of extraordinary and apparently baseless emotion. I literally staggered. And then the explanation came, and I knew I had found a frame of mind and body that belonged to Scotland, and particularly to the neighbourhood of Callander. Very odd these identities

of sensation, and the world of connotations implied ; highland huts, and peat smoke, and the brown, swirling rivers, and wet clothes, and whisky, and the romance of the past, and that indescribable bite of the whole thing at a man's heart, which is—or rather lies at the bottom of—a story.

I don't know if you are a Barbey d'Aurévilly-an. I am. I have a great delight in his Norman stories. Do you know the *Chevalier des Touches* and *L'Ensorcelée?* They are admirable, they reek of the soil and the past. But I was rather thinking just now of *Le Rideau Cramoisi*, and its adorable setting of the stopped coach, the dark street, the home-going in the inn yard, and the red blind illuminated. Without doubt, *there* was an identity of sensation ; one of those conjunctions in life that had filled Barbey full to the brim, and permanently bent his memory.

I wonder exceedingly if I have done anything at all good ; and who can tell me ? and why should I wish to know ? In so little a while, I, and the English language, and the bones of my descendants, will have ceased to be a memory ! And yet—and yet—one would like to leave an image for a few years upon men's minds—for fun. This is a very dark frame of mind, consequent on overwork and the conclusion of the excruciating *Ebb Tide.* Adieu.

What do you suppose should be done with *The Ebb Tide?* It would make a volume of 200 pp. ; on the other hand, I might likely have some more stories soon : *The Owl, Death in the Pot, The Sleeper Awakened ;* all these are possible. *The Owl* might be half as long ; *The Sleeper Awakened,* ditto ; *Death in the Pot* a deal shorter, I believe. Then there's the *Go-Between,* which is not impossible altogether. *The Owl, The Sleeper Awakened,* and the *Go-Between* end reasonably well ; *Death in the Pot* is an ungodly massacre. O, well, *The Owl* only ends well in so far as some lovers come together, and nobody is killed

at the moment, but you know they are all doomed, they are Chouan fellows.[1]

Friday, 9th.—Well, the mail is in; no Blue-book, depressing letter from C.; a long, amusing ramble from my mother; vast masses of Romeike; they *are* going to war now; and what will that lead to? and what has driven them to it but the persistent misconduct of these two officials? I know I ought to rewrite the end of this bloody *Ebb Tide:* well, I can't. *C'est plus fort que moi;* it has to go the way it is, and be jowned to it! From what I make out of the reviews,[2] I think it would be better not to republish *The Ebb Tide:* but keep it for other tales, if they should turn up. Very amusing how the reviews pick out one story and damn the rest! and it is always a different one. Be sure you send me the article from Le Temps. Talking of which, ain't it manners in France to acknowledge a dedication? I have never heard a word from Le Sieur Bourget.

Saturday, 17th.—Since I wrote this last, I have written a whole chapter of my Grandfather, and read it to-night; it was on the whole much appreciated, and I kind of hope it ain't bad myself. 'Tis a third writing, but it wants a fourth. By next mail, I believe I might send you 3 chapters. That is to say *Family Annals, The Service of the Northern Lights,* and *The Building of the Bell Rock.* Possibly even 4—*A Houseful of Boys.* I could finish my Grandfather very easy now; my father and Uncle Alan stop the way. I propose to call the book: *Northern Lights: Memoirs of a Family of Engineers.* I tell you, it is going to be a good book. My idea in sending MS. would be to get it set up; two proofs to me, one to Professor Swan, Ardchapel, Helensburgh—mark it private and confidential

[1] *The Owl* was to be a Breton story of the Revolution; *Death in the Pot,* a tale of the Sta. Lucia mountains in California; the scene of *The Go-Between* was laid in the Pacific Islands; of *The Sleeper Awakened* I know nothing.

[2] Of *Island Nights' Entertainments.*

—one to yourself; and come on with criticisms! But I'll have to see. The total plan of the book is this—

I. Domestic Annals.
II. The Service of the Northern Lights.
III. The Building of the Bell Rock.
IV. A Houseful of Boys (or the Family in Baxter's Place).
V. Education of an Engineer.
VI. The Grandfather.
VII. Alan Stevenson.
VIII. Thomas Stevenson.

There will be an Introduction 'The Surname of Stevenson' which has proved a mighty queer subject of inquiry. But, Lord! if I were among libraries.

Sunday, 18*th*.—I shall put in this envelope the end of the ever-to-be-execrated *Ebb Tide*, or Stevenson's Blooming Error. Also, a paper apart for *David Balfour*. The slips must go in another enclosure, I suspect, owing to their beastly bulk. Anyway, there are two pieces of work off my mind, and though I could wish I had rewritten a little more of *David*, yet it was plainly to be seen it was impossible. All the points indicated by you have been brought out; but to rewrite the end, in my present state of over-exhaustion and fiction-phobia, would have been madness; and I let it go as it stood. My grandfather is good enough for me, these days. I do not work any less; on the whole, if anything, a little more. But it is different.

The slips go to you in four packets; I hope they are what they should be, but do not think so. I am at a pitch of discontent with fiction in all its form—or *my* forms—that prevents me being able to be even interested. I have had to stop all drink; smoking I am trying to stop also. It annoys me dreadfully: and yet if I take a glass of claret, I have a headache the next day! O, and a good headache too; none of your trifles.

Well, sir, here's to you, and farewell.—Yours ever,

R. L. S.

To Edmund Gosse

June 10th, 1893.

MY DEAR GOSSE,—My mother tells me you never received the very long and careful letter that I sent you more than a year ago; or is it two years?

I was indeed so much surprised at your silence that I wrote to Henry James and begged him to inquire if you had received it; his reply was an (if possible) higher power of the same silence; whereupon I bowed my head and acquiesced. But there is no doubt the letter was written and sent; and I am sorry it was lost, for it contained, among other things, an irrecoverable criticism of your father's *Life*, with a number of suggestions for another edition, which struck me at the time as excellent.

Well, suppose we call that cried off, and begin as before? It is fortunate indeed that we can do so, being both for a while longer in the day. But, alas! when I see "works of the late J. A. S.,"[1] I can see no help and no reconciliation possible. I wrote him a letter, I think, three years ago, heard in some roundabout way that he had received it, waited in vain for an answer (which had probably miscarried), and in a humour between frowns and smiles wrote to him no more. And now the strange, poignant, pathetic, brilliant creature is gone into the night, and the voice is silent that uttered so much excellent discourse; and I am sorry that I did not write to him again. Yet I am glad for him; light lie the turf! The Saturday is the only obituary I have seen, and I thought it very good upon the whole. I should be half tempted to write an *In Memoriam*, but I am submerged with other work. Are you going to do it? I very much admire your efforts that way; you are our only academician.

So you have tried fiction? I will tell you the truth:

[1] John Addington Symonds.

when I saw it announced, I was so sure you would send it to me, that I did not order it! But the order goes this mail, and I will give you news of it. Yes, honestly, fiction is very difficult; it is a terrible strain to *carry* your characters all that time. And the difficulty of according the narrative and the dialogue (in a work in the third person) is extreme. That is one reason out of half a dozen why I so often prefer the first. It is much in my mind just now, because of my last work, just off the stocks three days ago, *The Ebb Tide:* a dreadful, grimy business in the third person, where the strain between a vilely realistic dialogue and a narrative style pitched about (in phrase) 'four notes higher' than it should have been, has sown my head with grey hairs; or I believe so—if my head escaped, my heart has them.

The truth is, I have a little lost my way, and stand bemused at the cross-roads. A subject? Ay, I have dozens; I have at least four novels begun, they are none good enough; and the mill waits, and I'll have to take second best. *The Ebb Tide* I make the world a present of; I expect, and, I suppose, deserve to be torn to pieces; but there was all that good work lying useless, and I had to finish it!

All your news of your family is pleasant to hear. My wife has been very ill, but is now better; I may say I am ditto, *The Ebb Tide* having left me high and dry, which is a good example of the mixed metaphor. Our home, and estate, and our boys, and the politics of the island, keep us perpetually amused and busy; and I grind away with an odd, dogged, down sensation—and an idea *in petto* that the game is about played out. I have got too realistic, and I must break the trammels—I mean I would if I could; but the yoke is heavy. I saw with amusement that Zola says the same thing; and truly the *Débâcle* was a mighty big book, I have no need for a bigger, though the last part is a mere mistake in my opinion. But the Emperor, and Sedan, and the doctor at the ambulance, and the horses

in the field of battle, Lord, how gripped it is! What an epical performance! According to my usual opinion, I believe I could go over that book and leave a masterpiece by blotting and no ulterior art. But that is an old story, ever new with me. Taine gone, and Renan, and Symonds, and Tennyson, and Browning; the suns go swiftly out, and I see no suns to follow, nothing but a universal twilight of the demi-divinities, with parties like you and me and Lang beating on toy drums and playing on penny whistles about glow-worms. But Zola is big anyway; he has plenty in his belly; too much, that is all; he wrote the *Débâcle* and he wrote *La Bête humaine*, perhaps the most excruciatingly silly book that I ever read to an end. And why did I read it to an end, W. E. G.? Because the animal in me was interested in the lewdness. Not sincerely, of course, my mind refusing to partake in it; but the flesh was slightly pleased. And when it was done, I cast it from me with a peal of laughter, and forgot it, as I would forget a Montépin. Taine is to me perhaps the chief of these losses; I did luxuriate in his *Origines;* it was something beyond literature, not quite so good, if you please, but so much more systematic, and the pages that had to be "written" always so adequate. Robespierre, Napoleon, were both excellent good.

June 18th, '93.—Well, I have left fiction wholly, and gone to my Grandfather, and on the whole found peace. By next month my Grandfather will begin to be quite grown up. I have already three chapters about as good as done; by which, of course, as you know, I mean till further notice or the next discovery. I like biography far better than fiction myself: fiction is too free. In biography you have your little handful of facts, little bits of a puzzle, and you sit and think, and fit 'em together this way and that, and get up and throw 'em down, and say damn, and go out for a walk. And it's real soothing; and when done, gives an idea of finish to the writer that is very peaceful. Of course, it's not really so finished as

quite a rotten novel; it always has and always must have the incurable illogicalities of life about it, the fathoms of slack and the miles of tedium. Still, that's where the fun comes in; and when you have at last managed to shut up the castle spectre (dulness), the very outside of his door looks beautiful by contrast. There are pages in these books that may seem nothing to the reader; but you *remember what they were, you know what they might have been*, and they seem to you witty beyond comparison. In my Grandfather I've had (for instance) to give up the temporal order almost entirely; doubtless the temporal order is the great foe of the biographer; it is so tempting, so easy, and lo! there you are in the bog!—Ever yours, R. L. Stevenson.

With all kind messages from self and wife to you and yours. My wife is very much better, having been the early part of this year alarmingly ill. She is now all right, only complaining of trifles, annoying to her, but happily not interesting to her friends. I am in a hideous state, having stopped drink and smoking; yes, both. No wine, no tobacco; and the dreadful part of it is that—looking forward—I have—what shall I say?—nauseating intimations that it ought to be for ever.

To Henry James

Vailima Plantation, Samoan Islands,
June 17th, 1893.

my dear Henry James,—I believe I have neglected a mail in answering yours. You will be very sorry to hear that my wife was exceedingly ill, and very glad to hear that she is better. I cannot say that I feel any more anxiety about her. We shall send you a photograph of her taken in Sydney in her customary island habit as she

walks and gardens and shrilly drills her brown assistants. She was very ill when she sat for it, which may a little explain the appearance of the photograph. It reminds me of a friend of my grandmother's who used to say when talking to younger women, "Aweel, when I was young, I wasnae just exactly what ye wad call *bonny*, but I was pale, penetratin', and interestin'." I would not venture to hint that Fanny is "no bonny," but there is no doubt but that in this presentment she is "pale, penetratin', and interestin'."

As you are aware, I have been wading deep waters and contending with the great ones of the earth, not wholly without success. It is, you may be interested to hear, a dreary and infuriating business. If you can get the fools to admit one thing, they will always save their face by denying another. If you can induce them to take a step to the right hand, they generally indemnify themselves by cutting a caper to the left. I always held (upon no evidence whatever, from a mere sentiment or intuition) that politics was the dirtiest, the most foolish, and the most random of human employments. I always held, but now I know it! Fortunately, you have nothing to do with anything of the kind, and I may spare you the horror of further details.

I received from you a book by a man by the name of Anatole France. Why should I disguise it? I have no use for Anatole. He writes very prettily, and then afterwards? Baron Marbot was a different pair of shoes. So likewise is the Baron de Vitrolles, whom I am now perusing with delight. His escape in 1814 is one of the best pages I remember anywhere to have read. But Marbot and Vitrolles are dead, and what has become of the living? It seems as if literature were coming to a stand. I am sure it is with me; and I am sure everybody will say so when they have the privilege of reading *The Ebb Tide*. My dear man, the grimness of that story is not to be depicted in words. There are only four characters, to be sure, but

they are such a troop of swine! And their behaviour is really so deeply beneath any possible standard, that on a retrospect I wonder I have been able to endure them myself until the yarn was finished. Well, there is always one thing; it will serve as a touchstone. If the admirers of Zola admire him for his pertinent ugliness and pessimism, I think they should admire this; but if, as I have long suspected, they neither admire nor understand the man's art, and only wallow in his rancidness like a hound in offal, then they will certainly be disappointed in *The Ebb Tide.* Alas! poor little tale, it is not *even* rancid.

By way of an antidote or febrifuge, I am going on at a great rate with my History of the Stevensons, which I hope may prove rather amusing, in some parts at least. The excess of materials weighs upon me. My grandfather is a delightful comedy part; and I have to treat him besides as a serious and (in his way) a heroic figure, and at times I lose my way, and I fear in the end will blur the effect. However, *à la grâce de Dieu!* I'll make a spoon or spoil a horn. You see, I have to do the Building of the Bell Rock by cutting down and packing my grandsire's book, which I rather hope I have done, but do not know. And it makes a huge chunk of a very different style and quality between Chapters II. and IV. And it can't be helped! It is just a delightful and exasperating necessity. You know, the stuff is really excellent narrative: only, perhaps there's too much of it! There is the rub. Well, well, it will be plain to you that my mind is affected; it might be with less. *The Ebb Tide* and *Northern Lights* are a full meal for any plain man.

I have written and ordered your last book, *The Real Thing,* so be sure and don't send it. What else are you doing or thinking of doing? News I have none, and don't want any. I have had to stop all strong drink and all tobacco, and am now in a transition state between the two, which seems to be near madness. You never smoked, I think, so you can never taste the joys of stopping it.

But at least you have drunk, and you can enter perhaps into my annoyance when I suddenly find a glass of claret or a brandy-and-water give me a splitting headache the next morning. No mistake about it; drink anything, and there's your headache. Tobacco just as bad for me. If I live through this breach of habit, I shall be a white-livered puppy indeed. Actually I am so made, or so twisted, that I do not like to think of a life without the red wine on the table and the tobacco with its lovely little coal of fire. It doesn't amuse me from a distance. I may find it the Garden of Eden when I go in, but I don't like the colour of the gate-posts. Suppose somebody said to you, you are to leave your home, and your books, and your clubs, and go out and camp in mid-Africa, and command an expedition, you would howl, and kick, and flee. I think the same of a life without wine and tobacco; and if this goes on, I've got to go and do it, sir, in the living flesh!

I thought Bourget was a friend of yours? And I thought the French were a polite race? He has taken my dedication with a stately silence that has surprised me into apoplexy. Did I go and dedicate my book [1] to the nasty alien, and the 'norrid Frenchman, and the Bloody Furrineer? Well, I wouldn't do it again; and unless his case is susceptible of explanation, you might perhaps tell him so over the walnuts and the wine, by way of speeding the gay hours. Sincerely, I thought my dedication worth a letter.

If anything be worth anything here below! Do you know the story of the man who found a button in his hash, and called the waiter? "What do you call that?" says he. "Well," said the waiter, "what d'you expect? Expect to find a gold watch and chain?" Heavenly apologue, is it not? I expected (rather) to find a gold watch and chain; I expected to be able to smoke to excess and drink to comfort all the days of my life; and I am

[1] *Across the Plains.*

still indignantly staring on this button! It's not even a button; it's a teetotal badge!—Ever yours,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

To Sidney Colvin

Saturday, 24th (?) *June* [1893].

MY DEAR COLVIN,—Yesterday morning, after a day of absolute temperance, I awoke to the worst headache I had had yet. Accordingly, temperance was said farewell to, quinine instituted, and I believe my pains are soon to be over. We wait, with a kind of sighing impatience, for war to be declared, or to blow finally off, living in the meanwhile in a kind of children's hour of firelight and shadow and preposterous tales; the king seen at night galloping up our road upon unknown errands and covering his face as he passes our cook; Mataafa daily surrounded (when he awakes) with fresh "white man's boxes" (query, ammunition?) and professing to be quite ignorant of where they come from; marches of bodies of men across the island; concealment of ditto in the bush; the coming on and off of different chiefs; and such a mass of ravelment and rag-tag as the devil himself could not unwind.

Wednesday, 28th June.—Yesterday it rained with but little intermission, but I was jealous of news. Graham and I got into the saddle about 1 o'clock and off down to town. In town, there was nothing but rumours going; in the night drums had been beat, the men had run to arms on Mulinuu from as far as Vaiala, and the alarm proved false. There were no signs of any gathering in Apia proper, and the Secretary of State had no news to give. I believed him, too, for we are brither Scots. Then the temptation came upon me strong to go on to the ford and see the Mataafa villages, where we heard there was more afoot. Off we rode. When we came to Vaimusu, the houses were very full of men, but all seemingly unarmed.

Immediately beyond is that river over which we passed in our scamper with Lady Jersey; it was all solitary. Three hundred yards beyond is a second ford; and there —I came face to face with war. Under the trees on the further bank sat a picket of seven men with Winchesters; their faces bright, their eyes ardent. As we came up, they did not speak or move; only their eyes followed us. The horses drank, and we passed the ford. "Talofa!" I said, and the commandant of the picket said "Talofa"; and then, when we were almost by, remembered himself and asked where we were going. "To Faamuiná," I said, and we rode on. Every house by the wayside was crowded with armed men. There was the European house of a Chinaman on the right-hand side: a flag of truce flying over the gate—indeed we saw three of these in what little way we penetrated into Mataafa's lines—all the foreigners trying to protect their goods; and the Chinaman's verandah overflowed with men and girls and Winchesters. By the way we met a party of about ten or a dozen marching with their guns and cartridge-belts, and the cheerful alacrity and brightness of their looks set my head turning with envy and sympathy. Arrived at Vaiusu, the houses about the *malae* (village green) were thronged with men, all armed. On the outside of the council-house (which was all full within) there stood an orator; he had his back turned to his audience, and seemed to address the world at large; all the time we were there his strong voice continued unabated, and I heard snatches of political wisdom rising and falling.

The house of Faamuiná stands on a knoll in the *malae*. Thither we mounted, a boy ran out and took our horses, and we went in. Faamuiná was there himself, his wife Palepa, three other chiefs, and some attendants; and here again was this exulting spectacle as of people on their marriage day. Faamuiná (when I last saw him) was an elderly, limping gentleman, with much of the debility of age; it was a bright-eyed boy that greeted me; the lady

was no less excited; all had cartridge-belts. We stayed but a little while to smoke a selui; I would not have kava made, as I thought my escapade was already dangerous (perhaps even blameworthy) enough. On the way back, we were much greeted, and on coming to the ford, the commandant came and asked me if there were many on the other side. "Very many," said I; not that I knew, but I would not lead them on the ice. "That is well!" said he, and the little picket laughed aloud as we splashed into the river. We returned to Apia, through Apia, and out to windward as far as Vaiala, where the word went that the men of the Vaimauga had assembled. We met two boys carrying pigs, and saw six young men busy cooking in a cook-house; but no sign of an assembly; no arms, no blackened faces. (I forgot! As we turned to leave Faamuiná's, there ran forward a man with his face blackened, and the back of his lava-lava girded up so as to show his tattooed hips naked; he leaped before us, cut a wonderful caper, and flung his knife high in the air, and caught it. It was strangely savage and fantastic and high-spirited. I have seen a child doing the same antics long before in a dance, so that it is plainly an *accepted solemnity.* I should say that for weeks the children have been playing with spears.) Up by the plantation I took a short cut, which shall never be repeated, through grass and weeds over the horses' heads and among rolling stones; I thought we should have left a horse there, but fortune favoured us. So home, a little before six, in a dashing squall of rain, to a bowl of kava and dinner. But the impression on our minds was extraordinary; the sight of that picket at the ford, and those ardent, happy faces whirls in my head; the old aboriginal awoke in both of us and knickered like a stallion.

It is dreadful to think that I must sit apart here and do nothing; I do not know if I can stand it out. But you see, I may be of use to these poor people, if I keep quiet, and if I threw myself in, I should have a bad job

of it to save myself. There ; I have written this to you ; and it is still but 7.30 in the day, and the sun only about one hour up ; can I go back to my old grandpapa, and men sitting with Winchesters in my mind's eye ? No ; war is a huge *entraînement ;* there is no other temptation to be compared to it, not one. We were all wet, we had been about five hours in the saddle, mostly riding hard ; and we came home like schoolboys, with such a lightness of spirits, and I am sure such a brightness of eye, as you could have lit a candle at !

Do you appreciate the height and depth of my temptation ? that I have about nine miles to ride, and I can become a general officer ? and to-night I might seize Mulinuu and have the C. J. under arrest ? And yet I stay here ! It seems incredible, so huge is the empire of prudence and the second thought.

Thursday, 29*th.*—I had two priests to luncheon yesterday : the Bishop and Père Rémy. They were very pleasant, and quite clean too, which has been known sometimes not to be—even with bishops. Monseigneur is not unimposing ; with his white beard and his violet girdle he looks splendidly episcopal, and when our three waiting lads came up one after another and kneeled before him in the big hall, and kissed his ring, it did me good for a piece of pageantry. Rémy is very engaging ; he is a little, nervous, eager man, like a governess, and brimful of laughter and small jokes. So is the bishop indeed, and our luncheon party went off merrily—far more merrily than many a German spread, though with so much less liquor. One trait was delicious. With a complete ignorance of the Protestant that I would scarce have imagined, he related to us (as news) little stories from the gospels, and got the names all wrong ! His comments were delicious, and to our ears a thought irreverent. *"Ah ! il connaissait son monde, allez !" "Il était fin, notre Seigneur !"* etc.

Friday.—Down with Fanny and Belle, to lunch at the International. Heard there about the huge folly of the

hour, all the Mulinuu ammunition having been yesterday marched openly to vaults in Matafele ; and this morning, on a cry of protest from the whites, openly and humiliatingly disinterred and marched back again. People spoke of it with a kind of shrill note that did not quite satisfy me. They seemed not quite well at ease. Luncheon over, we rode out on the Malie road. All was quiet in Vaiusu, and when we got to the second ford, alas ! there was no picket—which was just what Belle had come to sketch. On through quite empty roads ; the houses deserted, never a gun to be seen ; and at last a drum and a penny whistle playing in Vaiusu, and a cricket match on the *malae !* Went up to Faamuiná's ; he is a trifle uneasy, though he gives us kava. I cannot see what ails him, then it appears that he has an engagement with the Chief Justice at half-past two to sell a piece of land. Is this the reason why war has disappeared ? We ride back, stopping to sketch here and there the fords, a flag of truce, etc. I ride on to Public Hall Committee and pass an hour with my committees very heavily. To the hotel to dinner, then to the ball, and home by eleven, very tired. At the ball I heard some news, of how the chief of Letonu said that I was the source of all this trouble, and should be punished, and my family as well. This, and the rudeness of the man at the ford of the Gase-gase, looks but ill ; I should have said that Faamuiná, as he approached the first ford, was spoken to by a girl, and immediately said good-bye and plunged into the bush ; the girl had told him there was a war party out from Mulinuu ; and a little further on, as we stopped to sketch a flag of truce, the beating of drums and the sound of a bugle from that direction startled us. But we saw nothing, and I believe Mulinuu is (at least at present) incapable of any act of offence. One good job, these threats to my home and family take away all my childish temptation to go out and fight. Our force must be here, to protect ourselves. I see panic rising among the whites ; I hear the shrill note of it in their voices,

and they talk already about a refuge on the war ships. There are two here, both German; and the *Orlando* is expected presently.

Sunday, 9th July.—Well, the war has at last begun. For four or five days, Apia has been filled by these poor children with their faces blacked, and the red handkerchief about their brows, that makes the Malietoa uniform, and the boats have been coming in from the windward, some of them 50 strong, with a drum and a bugle on board —the bugle always ill-played—and a sort of jester leaping and capering on the sparred nose of the boat, and the whole crew uttering from time to time a kind of menacing ululation. Friday they marched out to the bush; and yesterday morning we heard that some had returned to their houses for the night, as they found it "so uncomfortable." After dinner a messenger came up to me with a note, that the wounded were arriving at the Mission House. Fanny, Lloyd and I saddled and rode off with a lantern; it was a fine starry night, though pretty cold. We left the lantern at Tanugamanono, and then down in the starlight. I found Apia, and myself, in a strange state of flusteration; my own excitement was gloomy and (I may say) truculent; others appeared imbecile; some sullen. The best place in the whole town was the hospital. A longish frame-house it was, with a big table in the middle for operations, and ten Samoans, each with an average of four sympathisers, stretched along the walls. Clarke was there, steady as a die; Miss Large, little spectacled angel, showed herself a real trump; the nice, clean, German orderlies in their white uniforms looked and meant business. (I hear a fine story of Miss Large—a cast-iron teetotaller—going to the public-house for a bottle of brandy.)

The doctors were not there when I arrived; but presently it was observed that one of the men was going cold. He was a magnificent Samoan, very dark, with a noble aquiline countenance, like an Arab, I suppose, and was

surrounded by seven people, fondling his limbs as he lay: he was shot through both lungs. And an orderly was sent to the town for the (German naval) doctors, who were dining there. Meantime I found an errand of my own. Both Clarke and Miss Large expressed a wish to have the public hall, of which I am chairman, and I set off down town, and woke people out of their beds, and got a committee together, and (with a great deal of difficulty from one man, whom we finally overwhelmed) got the public hall for them. Bar the one man, the committee was splendid, and agreed in a moment to share the expense if the shareholders object. Back to the hospital about 11.30; found the German doctors there. Two men were going now, one that was shot in the bowels—he was dying rather hard, in a gloomy stupor of pain and laudanum, silent, with contorted face. The chief, shot through the lungs, was lying on one side, awaiting the last angel; his family held his hands and legs: they were all speechless, only one woman suddenly clasped his knee, and "keened" for the inside of five seconds, and fell silent again. Went home, and to bed about two A.M. What actually passed seems undiscoverable; but the Mataafas were surely driven back out of Vaitele; that is a blow to them, and the resistance was far greater than had been anticipated—which is a blow to the Laupepas. All seems to indicate a long and bloody war.

Frank's house in Mulinuu was likewise filled with wounded; many dead bodies were brought in; I hear with certainty of five, wrapped in mats; and a pastor goes to-morrow to the field to bring others. The Laupepas brought in eleven heads to Mulinuu, and to the great horror and consternation of the native mind, one proved to be a girl, and was identified as that of a Taupou—or Maid of the Village—from Savaii. I hear this morning, with great relief, that it has been returned to Malie, wrapped in the most costly silk handkerchiefs, and with an apologetic embassy. This could easily happen. The girl was of

course attending on her father with ammunition, and got shot; her hair was cut short to make her father's war head-dress—even as our own Sina's is at this moment; and the decollator was probably, in his red flurry of fight, wholly unconscious of her sex. I am sorry for him in the future; he must make up his mind to many bitter jests —perhaps to vengeance. But what an end to one chosen for her beauty and, in the time of peace, watched over by trusty crones and hunchbacks!

Evening.—Can I write or not? I played lawn tennis in the morning, and after lunch down with Graham to Apia. Ulu, he that was shot in the lungs, still lives; he that was shot in the bowels is gone to his fathers, poor, fierce child! I was able to be of some very small help, and in the way of helping myself to information, to prove myself a mere gazer at meteors. But there seems no doubt the Mataafas for the time are scattered; the most of our friends are involved in this disaster, and Mataafa himself—who might have swept the islands a few months ago—for him to fall so poorly, doubles my regret. They say the Taupou had a gun and fired; probably an excuse manufactured *ex post facto*. I go down to-morrow at 12, to stay the afternoon, and help Miss Large. In the hospital to-day, when I first entered it, there were no attendants; only the wounded and their friends, all equally sleeping and their heads poised upon the wooden pillows. There is a pretty enough boy there, slightly wounded, whose fate is to be envied: two girls, and one of the most beautiful, with beaming eyes, tend him and sleep upon his pillow. In the other corner, another young man, very patient and brave, lies wholly deserted. Yet he seems to me far the better of the two; but not so pretty! Heavens, what a difference that makes; in our not very well proportioned bodies and our finely hideous faces, the 1-32nd—rather the 1-64th—this way or that! Sixteen heads in all at Mulinuu. I am so stiff I can scarce move without a howl.

Monday, 10*th*.—Some news that Mataafa is gone to Savaii by way of Manono: this may mean a great deal more warfaring, and no great issue. (When Sosimo came in this morning with my breakfast he had to lift me up. It is no joke to play lawn tennis after carrying your right arm in a sling so many years.) What a hard, unjust business this is! On the 28th, if Mataafa had moved, he could have still swept Mulinuu. He waited, and I fear he is now only the stick of a rocket.

Wednesday, 12*th*.—No more political news; but many rumours. The government troops are off to Manono; no word of Mataafa. O, there is a passage in my mother's letter which puzzles me as to a date. Is it next Christmas you are coming? or the Christmas after? This is most important, and must be understood at once. If it is next Christmas, I could not go to Ceylon, for lack of gold, and you would have to adopt one of the following alternatives: 1st, either come straight on here and pass a month with us; 'tis the rainy season, but we have often lovely weather. Or (2nd) come to Hawaii and I will meet you there. Hawaii is only a week's sail from S. Francisco, making only about sixteen days on the heaving ocean; and the steamers run once a fortnight, so that you could turn round; and you could thus pass a day or two in the States—a fortnight even—and still see me. But I have sworn to take no further excursions till I have money saved to pay for them; and to go to Ceylon and back would be torture unless I had a lot. You must answer this at once, please; so that I may know what to do. We would dearly like you to come on here. I'll tell you how it can be done; I can come up and meet you at Hawaii, and if you had at all got over your seasickness, I could just come on board and we could return together to Samoa, and you could have a month of our life here, which I believe you could not help liking. Our horses are the devil, of course, miserable screws, and some of them a little vicious. I had a dreadful fright—

the passage in my mother's letter is recrossed and I see it says the end of /94: so much the better, then; but I would like to submit to you my alternative plan. I could meet you at Hawaii, and reconduct you to Hawaii, so that we could have a full six weeks together and I believe a little over, and you would see this place of mine, and have a sniff of native life, native foods, native houses —and perhaps be in time to see the German flag raised, who knows?—and we could generally yarn for all we were worth. I should like you to see Vailima; and I should be curious to know how the climate affected you. It is quite hit or miss; it suits me, it suits Graham, it suits all our family; others it does not suit at all. It is either gold or poison. I rise at six, the rest at seven; lunch is at 12; at five we go to lawn tennis till dinner at six; and to roost early.

A man brought in a head to Mulinuu in great glory; they washed the black paint off, and behold! it was his brother. When I last heard he was sitting in his house, with the head upon his lap, and weeping. Barbarous war is an ugly business; but I believe the civilised is fully uglier; but Lord! what fun!

I should say we now have definite news that there are *three* women's heads; it was difficult to get it out of the natives, who are all ashamed, and the women all in terror of reprisals. Nothing has been done to punish or disgrace these hateful innovators. It was a false report that the head had been returned.

Thursday, 13*th*.—Maatafa driven away from Savaii. I cannot write about this, and do not know what should be the end of it.

Monday, 17*th*.—Haggard and Ahrens (a German clerk) to lunch yesterday. There is no real certain news yet: I must say, no man could *swear* to any result; but the sky looks horribly black for Mataafa and so many of our friends along with him. The thing has an abominable, a beastly, nightmare interest. But it's wonderful generally

how little one cares about the wounded; hospital sights, etc.; things that used to murder me. I was far more struck with the excellent way in which things were managed; as if it had been a peep-show; I held some of the things at an operation, and did not care a dump.

Tuesday, 18*th*.—Sunday came the *Katoomba*, Captain Bickford, C.M.G. Yesterday, Graham and I went down to call, and find he has orders to suppress Mataafa at once, and has to go down to-day before daybreak to Manono. He is a very capable, energetic man; if he had only come ten days ago, all this would have gone by; but now the questions are thick and difficult. (1) Will Mataafa surrender? (2) Will his people allow themselves to be disarmed? (3) What will happen to them if they do? (4) What will any of them believe after former deceptions? The three consuls were scampering on horseback to Leulumoega to the king; no Cusack-Smith, without whose accession I could not send a letter to Mataafa. I rode up here, wrote my letter in the sweat of the concordance and with the able-bodied help of Lloyd—and dined. Then down in continual showers and pitchy darkness, and to Cusack-Smith's; not returned. Back to the inn for my horse, and to C.-S.'s, when I find him just returned and he accepts my letter. Thence home, by 12.30, jolly tired and wet. And to-day have been in a crispation of energy and ill-temper, raking my wretched mail together. It is a hateful business, waiting for the news; it may come to a fearful massacre yet.—Yours ever, R. L. S.

To James S. Stevenson

This is addressed to a very remote cousin in quest of information about the origins of the family.

Vailima, Samoa, June 19*th*, 1893.

DEAR MR. STEVENSON,—I am reminded by coming across some record of relations between my grandfather,

Robert Stevenson, C.E., Edinburgh, and Robert Stevenson, Esq., Secretary to the Royal Exchange, Glasgow, and I presume a son of Hugh Stevenson who died in Tobago 16th April 1774, that I have not yet consulted my cousins in Glasgow.

I am engaged in writing a Life of my grandfather, my uncle Alan, and my father, Thomas, and I find almost inconceivable difficulty in placing and understanding their (and my) descent.

Might I ask if you have any material to go upon? The smallest notes would be like found gold to me; and an old letter invaluable.

I have not got beyond James Stevenson and Jean Keir his spouse, to whom Robert the First (?) was born in 1675. Could you get me further back? Have you any old notes of the trouble in the West Indian business which took Hugh and Alan to their deaths? How had they acquired so considerable a business at an age so early? You see how the queries pour from me; but I will ask nothing more in words. Suffice it to say that any information, however insignificant, as to our common forbears, will be very gratefully received. In case you should have any original documents, it would be better to have copies sent to me in this outlandish place, for the expense of which I will account to you as soon as you let me know the amount, and it will be wise to register your letter.—Believe me, in the old, honoured Scottish phrase, your affectionate cousin,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

To HENRY JAMES

Apia, July 1893.

MY DEAR HENRY JAMES,—Yes. *Les Trophées* is, on the whole, a book.[1] It is excellent; but is it a life's work?

[1] Volume of sonnets by José Maria de Hérédia.

I always suspect *you* of a volume of sonnets up your sleeve; when is it coming down? I am in one of my moods of wholesale impatience with all fiction and all verging on it, reading instead, with rapture, *Fountainhall's Decisions*. You never read it: well, it hasn't much form, and is inexpressibly dreary, I should suppose, to others—and even to me for pages. It's like walking in a mine underground, and with a damned bad lantern, and picking out pieces of ore. This, and war, will be my excuse for not having read your (doubtless) charming work of fiction. The revolving year will bring me round to it; and I know, when fiction shall begin to feel a little *solid* to me again, that I shall love it, because it's James. Do you know, when I am in this mood, I would rather try to read a bad book? It's not so disappointing, anyway. And *Fountainhall* is prime, two big folio volumes, and all dreary, and all true, and all as terse as an obituary; and about one interesting fact on an average in twenty pages, and ten of them unintelligible for technicalities. There's literature, if you like! It feeds; it falls about you genuine like rain. Rain: nobody has done justice to rain in literature yet: surely a subject for a Scot. But then you can't do rain in that ledger-book style that I am trying for—or between a ledger-book and an old ballad. How to get over, how to escape from, the besotting *particularity* of fiction. "Roland approached the house; it had green doors and window blinds; and there was a scraper on the upper step." To hell with Roland and the scraper!—Yours ever, R. L. S.

To A. Conan Doyle

Vailima, July 12, 1893.

MY DEAR DR. CONAN DOYLE,—The *White Company* has not yet turned up; but when it does—which I suppose will be next mail—you shall hear news of me. I have a

great talent for compliment, accompanied by a hateful, even a diabolic frankness.

Delighted to hear I have a chance of seeing you and Mrs. Doyle; Mrs. Stevenson bids me say (what is too true) that our rations are often spare. Are you Great Eaters? Please reply.

As to ways and means, here is what you will have to do. Leave San Francisco by the down mail, get off at Samoa, and twelve days or a fortnight later, you can continue your journey to Auckland per Upolu, which will give you a look at Tonga and possibly Fiji by the way. Make this a *first part of your plans.* A fortnight, even of Vailima diet, could kill nobody.

We are in the midst of war here; rather a nasty business, with the head-taking; and there seems signs of other trouble. But I believe you need make no change in your design to visit us. All should be well over; and if it were not, why! you need not leave the steamer.—Yours very truly, ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

To CHARLES BAXTER

19*th July* '93.

. . . WE are in the thick of war—see Illustrated London News—we have only two outside boys left to us. Nothing is doing, and *per contra* little paying. . . . My life here is dear; but I can live within my income for a time at least—so long as my prices keep up—and it seems a clear duty to waste none of it on gadding about. . . . My Life of my family fills up intervals, and should be an excellent book when it is done, but big, damnably big.

My dear old man, I perceive by a thousand signs that we grow old, and are soon to pass away; I hope with dignity; if not, with courage at least. I am myself very ready; or would be—will be—when I have made a little

money for my folks. The blows that have fallen upon you are truly terrifying; I wish you strength to bear them. It is strange, I must seem to you to blaze in a Birmingham prosperity and happiness; and to myself I seem a failure. The truth is, I have never got over the last influenza yet, and am miserably out of heart and out of kilter. Lungs pretty right, stomach nowhere, spirits a good deal overshadowed; but we'll come through it yet, and cock our bonnets. (I confess with sorrow that I am not yet quite sure about the *intellects;* but I hope it is only one of my usual periods of non-work. They are more unbearable now, because I cannot rest. *No rest but the grave for Sir Walter!* O the words ring in a man's head.) R. L. S.

To Sidney Colvin

[*Vailima*] *August* 1893.

MY DEAR COLVIN,—Quite impossible to write. Your letter is due to-day; a nasty, rainy-like morning with huge blue clouds, and a huge indigo shadow on the sea, and my lamp still burning at near 7. Let me humbly give you news. Fanny seems on the whole the most, or the only, powerful member of the family; for some days she has been the Flower of the Flock. Belle is begging for quinine. Lloyd and Graham have both been down with "belly belong him" (Black Boy speech). As for me, I have to lay aside my lawn tennis, having (as was to be expected) had a smart but eminently brief hemorrhage. I am also on the quinine flask. I have been re-casting the beginning of the *Hanging Judge* or *Weir of Hermiston;* then I have been cobbling on my Grandfather, whose last chapter (there are only to be four) is in the form of pieces of paper, a huge welter of inconsequence, and that glimmer of faith (or hope) which one learns at this trade, that somehow and some time, by perpetual staring and glower-

ing and re-writing, order will emerge. It is indeed a queer hope; there is one piece for instance that I want in—I cannot put it one place for a good reason—I cannot put it another for a better—and every time I look at it, I turn sick and put the MS. away.

Well, your letter hasn't come, and a number of others are missing. It looks as if a mail-bag had gone on, so I'll blame nobody, and proceed to business.

It looks as if I was going to send you the first three chapters of my Grandfather. . . . If they were set up, it would be that much anxiety off my mind. I have a strange feeling of responsibility, as if I had my ancestors' *souls* in my charge, and might miscarry with them.

There's a lot of work gone into it, and a lot more is needed. Still Chapter I. seems about right to me, and much of Chapter II. Chapter III. I know nothing of, as I told you. And Chapter IV. is at present all ends and beginnings; but it can be pulled together.

This is all I have been able to screw up to you for this month, and I may add that it is not only more than you deserve, but just about more than I was equal to. I have been and am entirely useless; just able to tinker at my Grandfather. The three chapters—perhaps also a little of the fourth—will come home to you next mail by the hand of my cousin Graham Balfour, a very nice fellow whom I recommend to you warmly—and whom I think you will like. This will give you time to consider my various and distracted schemes.

All our wars are over in the meantime, to begin again as soon as the war-ships leave. Adieu. R. L. S.

To A. Conan Doyle

Vailima, August 23rd, 1893.

MY DEAR DR. CONAN DOYLE,—I am reposing after a somewhat severe experience upon which I think it my

duty to report to you. Immediately after dinner this evening it occurred to me to re-narrate to my native overseer Simelé your story of *The Engineer's Thumb*. And, sir, I have done it. It was necessary, I need hardly say, to go somewhat farther afield than you have done. To explain (for instance) what a railway is, what a steam hammer, what a coach and horse, what coining, what a criminal, and what the police. I pass over other and no less necessary explanations. But I did actually succeed; and if you could have seen the drawn, anxious features and the bright, feverish eyes of Simelé, you would have (for the moment at least) tasted glory. You might perhaps think that, were you to come to Samoa, you might be introduced as the Author of *The Engineer's Thumb*. Disabuse yourself. They do not know what it is to make up a story. *The Engineer's Thumb* (God forgive me) was narrated as a piece of actual and factual history. Nay, and more, I who write to you have had the indiscretion to perpetrate a trifling piece of fiction entitled *The Bottle Imp*. Parties who come up to visit my unpretentious mansion, after having admired the ceilings by Vanderputty and the tapestry by Gobbling, manifest towards the end a certain uneasiness which proves them to be fellows of an infinite delicacy. They may be seen to shrug a brown shoulder, to roll up a speaking eye, and at last secret burst from them: "Where is the bottle?" Alas, my friends (I feel tempted to say), you will find it by the Engineer's Thumb! Talofa-soifua.

O a'u, o lau uo moni, O Tusitala.

More commonly known as R. L. Stevenson.

Have read the *Refugees;* Condé and old P. Murat very good; Louis XIV. and Louvois with the letter bag very rich. You have reached a trifle wide perhaps; too *many* celebrities? Though I was delighted to re-encounter my old friend Du Chaylu. Old Murat is perhaps your high-water mark; 'tis excellently human, cheerful and

real. Do it again. Madame de Maintenon struck me as quite good. Have you any document for the decapitation? It sounds steepish. The devil of all that first part is that you see old Dumas; yet your Louis XIV. is *distinctly good.* I am much interested with this book, which fulfils a good deal, and promises more. Question: How far a Historical Novel should be wholly episodic? I incline to that view, with trembling. I shake hands with you on old Murat. R. L. S.

To Augustus St. Gaudens

Mr. St. Gaudens' large medallion portrait in bronze, executed from sittings given in 1887, had at last found its way to Apia, but not yet to Vailima.

Vailima, September 1893.

MY DEAR ST. GAUDENS,—I had determined not to write to you till I had seen the medallion, but it looks as if that might mean the Greek Kalends or the day after to-morrow. Reassure yourself, your part is done, it is ours that halts—the consideration of conveyance over our sweet little road on boys' backs, for we cannot very well apply the horses to this work; there is only one; you cannot put it in a panier; to put it on the horse's back we have not the heart. Beneath the beauty of R. L. S., to say nothing of his verses, which the publishers find heavy enough, and the genius of the god-like sculptor, the spine would snap and the well-knit limbs of the (ahem) cart-horse would be loosed by death. So you are to conceive me, sitting in my house, dubitative, and the medallion chuckling in the warehouse of the German firm, for some days longer; and hear me meanwhile on the golden letters.

Alas! they are all my fancy painted, but the price is prohibitive. I cannot do it. It is another day-dream burst. Another gable of Abbotsford has gone down, fortunately before it was builded, so there's nobody

injured—except me. I had a strong conviction that I was a great hand at writing inscriptions, and meant to exhibit and test my genius on the walls of my house; and now I see I can't. It is generally thus. The Battle of the Golden Letters will never be delivered. On making preparation to open the campaign, the King found himself face to face with invincible difficulties, in which the rapacity of a mercenary soldiery and the complaints of an impoverished treasury played an equal part.—Ever yours, ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

I enclose a bill for the medallion; have been trying to find your letter, quite in vain, and therefore must request you to pay for the bronze letters yourself and let me know the damage. R. L. S.

TO JAMES S. STEVENSON

Vailima Plantation, Island of Upolu, Samoa, Sept. 4th, 1893.

MY DEAR COUSIN,—I thank you cordially for your kinsmanlike reply to my appeal. Already the notes from the family Bible have spared me one blunder, which I had from some notes in my grandfather's own hand; and now, like the daughters of the horseleech, my voice is raised again to put you to more trouble. "Nether Carsewell, Neilston," I read. My knowledge of Scotland is fairly wide, but it does not include Neilston.

However, I find by the (original) Statistical Account, it is a parish in Renfrew. Do you know anything of it? Have you identified Nether Carsewell? Have the Neilston parish registers been searched? I see whole vistas of questions arising, and here am I in Samoa!

I shall write by this mail to my lawyer to have the records searched, and to my mother to go and inquire in the parish itself. But perhaps you may have some

further information, and if so I should be glad of it. If you have not, pray do not trouble to answer. As to your father's blunder of "Stevenson of Cauldwell," it is now explained: *Carse*well may have been confounded with *Cauldwell:* and it seems likely our man may have been a tenant or retainer of Mure of Cauldwell, a very ancient and honourable family, who seems to have been at least a neighbouring laird to the parish of Neilston. I was just about to close this, when I observed again your obliging offer of service, and I take you promptly at your word.

Do you think that you or your son could find a day to visit Neilston and try to identify Nether Carsewell, find what size of a farm it is, to whom it belonged, etc.? I shall be very much obliged. I am pleased indeed to learn some of my books have given pleasure to your family; and with all good wishes, I remain, your affectionate cousin, ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

The registers I shall have seen to, through my lawyer.

TO GEORGE MEREDITH

Sept. 5th, 1893,
Vailima Plantation, Upolu, Samoa.

MY DEAR MEREDITH,—I have again and again taken up the pen to write to you, and many beginnings have gone into the waste paper basket (I have one now—for the second time in my life—and feel a big man on the strength of it). And no doubt it requires some decision to break so long a silence. My health is vastly restored, and I am now living patriarchally in this place six hundred feet above the sea on the shoulder of a mountain of 1500. Behind me, the unbroken bush slopes up to the backbone of the island (3 to 4000) without a house, with no inhabitants save a few runaway black boys, wild pigs and cattle,

and wild doves and flying foxes, and many parti-coloured birds, and many black, and many white: a very eerie, dim, strange place and hard to travel. I am the head of a household of five whites, and of twelve Samoans, to all of whom I am the chief and father: my cook comes to me and asks leave to marry—and his mother, a fine old chief woman, who has never lived here, does the same. You may be sure I granted the petition. It is a life of great interest, complicated by the Tower of Babel, that old enemy. And I have all the time on my hands for literary work.

My house is a great place; we have a hall fifty feet long with a great redwood stair ascending from it, where we dine in state—myself usually dressed in a singlet and a pair of trousers—and attended on by servants in a single garment, a kind of kilt—also flowers and leaves —and their hair often powdered with lime. The European who came upon it suddenly would think it was a dream. We have prayers on Sunday night—I am a perfect pariah in the island not to have them oftener, but the spirit is unwilling and the flesh proud, and I cannot go it more. It is strange to see the long line of the brown folk crouched along the wall with lanterns at intervals before them in the big shadowy hall, with an oak cabinet at one end of it and a group of Rodin's (which native taste regards as *prodigieusement leste*) presiding over all from the top—and to hear the long rambling Samoan hymn rolling up (God bless me, what style)! But I am off business to-day, and this is not meant to be literature).

I have asked Colvin to send you a copy of *Catriona*, which I am sometimes tempted to think is about my best work. I hear word occasionally of the *Amazing Marriage*. It will be a brave day for me when I get hold of it. Gower Woodseer is now an ancient, lean, grim, exiled Scot, living and labouring as for a wager in the tropics; still active, still with lots of fire in him, but the youth—ah, the youth where is it? For years after I

came here, the critics (those genial gentlemen) used to deplore the relaxation of my fibre and the idleness to which I had succumbed. I hear less of this now; the next thing is they will tell me I am writing myself out! and that my unconscientious conduct is bringing their grey hairs with sorrow to the dust. I do not know—I mean I do know one thing. For fourteen years I have not had a day's real health; I have wakened sick and gone to bed weary; and I have done my work unflinchingly. I have written in bed, and written out of it, written in hemorrhages, written in sickness, written torn by coughing, written when my head swam for weakness; and for so long, it seems to me I have won my wager and recovered my glove. I am better now, have been rightly speaking since first I came to the Pacific; and still, few are the days when I am not in some physical distress. And the battle goes on—ill or well, is a trifle; so as it goes. I was made for a contest, and the Powers have so willed that my battlefield should be this dingy, inglorious one of the bed and the physic bottle. At least I have not failed, but I would have preferred a place of trumpetings and the open air over my head.

This is a devilish egotistical yarn. Will you try to imitate me in that if the spirit ever moves you to reply? And meantime be sure that away in the midst of the Pacific there is a house on a wooded island where the name of George Meredith is very dear, and his memory (since it must be no more) is continually honoured.—Ever your friend, ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

Remember me to Mariette, if you please; and my wife sends her most kind remembrances to yourself.

R. L. S.

TO CHARLES BAXTER

Finished on the way to Honolulu for a health change which turned out unfortunate. With the help of Mr. J. H. Stevenson and other correspondents he had now, as we have seen, been able (regret-

fully giving up the possibility of a Macgregor lineage) to identify his forbears as having about 1670 been tenant farmers at Nether Carsewell in Renfrewshire. The German government at home had taken his *Footnote to History* much less kindly than his German neighbours on the spot, and the Tauchnitz edition had been confiscated and destroyed and its publisher fined.

[*Vailima, and s.s.* Mariposa, *September* 1893.]

MY DEAR CHARLES,—Here is a job for you. It appears that about 1665, or earlier, James Stevenson {in / of} Nether Carsewell, parish of Neilston, flourished. Will you kindly send an able-bodied reader to compulse the parish registers of Neilston, if they exist or go back as far? Also could any trace be found through Nether-Carsewell? I expect it to have belonged to Mure of Cauldwell. If this be so, might not the Cauldwell charter chest contain some references to their Stevenson tenantry? Perpend upon it. But clap me on the judicious, able-bodied reader on the spot. Can I really have found the tap-root of my illustrious ancestry at last? Souls of my fathers! What a giggle-iggle-orious moment! I have drawn on you for £400. Also I have written to Tauchnitz announcing I should bear one-half part of his fines and expenses, amounting to £62, 10s. The £400 includes £160 which I have laid out here in land. Vanu Manutagi —the vale of crying birds (the wild dove)—is now mine: it was Fanny's wish and she is to buy it from me again when she has made that much money.

Will you please order for me through your bookseller the *Mabinogion* of Lady Charlotte Guest—if that be her name—and the original of Cook's voyages lately published? Also, I see announced a map of the Great North Road: you might see what it is like: if it is highly detailed, or has any posting information, I should like it.

This is being finished on board the *Mariposa* going north. I am making the run to Honolulu and back for health's sake. No inclination to write more.—As ever,

R. L. S.

To Sidney Colvin

On a first reading of the incomplete MS. of *The Ebb Tide*, without its concluding chapters, which are the strongest, dislike of the three detestable—or rather two detestable and one contemptible—chief characters had made me unjust to the imaginative force and vividness of the treatment.

[*Vailima*] 23*rd August.*

MY DEAR COLVIN,—Your pleasing letter *re The Ebb Tide*, to hand. I propose, if it be not too late, to delete Lloyd's name. He has nothing to do with the last half. The first we wrote together, as the beginning of a long yarn. The second is entirely mine ; and I think it rather unfair on the young man to couple his name with so infamous a work. Above all, as you had not read the two last chapters, which seem to me the most ugly and cynical of all.

You will see that I am not in a good humour ; and I am not. It is not because of your letter, but because of the complicated miseries that surround me and that I choose to say nothing of. . . . Life is not all Beer and Skittles. The inherent tragedy of things works itself out from white to black and blacker, and the poor things of a day look ruefully on. Does it shake my cast-iron faith ? I cannot say it does. I believe in an ultimate decency of things ; ay, and if I woke in hell, should still believe it ! But it is hard walking, and I can see my own share in the missteps, and can bow my head to the result, like an old, stern, unhappy devil of a Norseman, as my ultimate character is. . . .

Well, *il faut cultiver son jardin.* That last expression of poor, unhappy human wisdom I take to my heart and go to *St. Ives.*

24*th Aug.*—And did, and worked about 2 hours and got to sleep ultimately and " a' the clouds has blawn away." " Be sure we'll have some pleisand weather, When a' the clouds (storms ?) has blawn (gone ?) away."

Verses that have a quite inexplicable attraction for me, and I believe had for Burns. They have no merit, but are somehow good. I am now in a most excellent humour.

I am deep in *St. Ives* which, I believe, will be the next novel done. But it is to be clearly understood that I promise nothing, and may throw in your face the very last thing you expect—or I expect. *St. Ives* will (to my mind) not be wholly bad. It is written in rather a funny style ; a little stilted and left-handed ; the style of St. Ives ; also, to some extent, the style of R. L. S. dictating. *St. Ives* is unintellectual, and except as an adventure novel, dull. But the adventures seem to me sound and pretty probable ; and it is a love story. Speed his wings !

Sunday night.—De cœur un peu plus dispos, monsieur et cher confrère, je me remets à vous écrire. St. Ives is now in the 5th chapter copying ; in the 14th chapter of the dictated draft. I do not believe I shall end by disliking it.

Monday.—Well, here goes again for the news. Fanny is *very well* indeed, and in good spirits ; I am in good spirits, but not *very* well ; Lloyd is in good spirits and very well ; Belle has a real good fever which has put her pipe out wholly. Graham goes back this mail. He takes with him three chapters of *The Family*, and is to go to you as soon as he can. He cannot be much the master of his movements, but you grip him when you can and get all you can from him, as he has lived about six months with us and he can tell you just what is true and what is not—and not the dreams of dear old Ross.[1] He is a good fellow, is he not ?

Since you rather revise your views of *The Ebb Tide*, I think Lloyd's name might stick, but I'll leave it to you. I'll tell you just how it stands. Up to the discovery of the champagne, the tale was all planned between

[1] Dr. Fairfax Ross, a distinguished physician of Sydney, and friend of the Stevenson family, who during a visit to England this summer had conveyed to me no very reassuring impression as to the healthfulness of the island life and climate.

us and drafted by Lloyd ; from that moment he has had nothing to do with it except talking it over. For we changed our plan, gave up the projected Monte Cristo, and cut it down for a short story. My jmpression—(I beg your pardon—this is a local joke—a firm here had on its beer labels, " sole jmporters ")—is that it will never be popular, but might make a little *succès de scandale.* However, I'm done with it now, and not sorry, and the crowd may rave and mumble its bones for what I care.

Hole essential.[1] I am sorry about the maps ; but I want 'em for next edition, so see and have proofs sent. You are quite right about the bottle and the great Huish, I must try to make it clear. No, I will not write a play for Irving nor for the devil. Can you not see that the work of *falsification* which a play demands is of all tasks the most ungrateful ? And I have done it a long while—and nothing ever came of it.

Consider my new proposal, I mean Honolulu. You would get the Atlantic and the Rocky Mountains, would you not ? for bracing. And so much less sea ! And then you could actually see Vailima, which I *would* like you to, for it's beautiful and my home and tomb that is to be ; though it's a wrench not to be planted in Scotland—that I can never deny—if I could only be buried in the hills, under the heather and a table tombstone like the martyrs, where the whaups and plovers are crying ! Did you see a man who wrote the *Stickit Minister*,[2] and dedicated it to me, in words that brought the tears to my eyes every time I looked at them. " Where about the graves of the martyrs the whaups are crying. *His* heart remembers how." Ah, by God, it does ! Singular that I should fulfil the Scots destiny throughout, and live a voluntary

[1] W. Hole, R.S.A. : essential for the projected illustrations to *Kidnapped* and *Catriona.*

[2] Mr. S. R. Crockett. The words quoted from this gentleman's dedication were worked by Stevenson into a very moving and metrically original set of verses, addressed to him in acknowledgment (*Songs of Travel,* xlii.).

exile, and have my head filled with the blessed, beastly place all the time!

And now a word as regards the delusions of the dear Ross, who remembers, I believe, my letters and Fanny's when we were first installed, and were really hoeing a hard row. We have salad, beans, cabbages, tomatoes, asparagus, kohl-rabi, oranges, limes, barbadines, pine-apples, Cape gooseberries—galore; pints of milk and cream; fresh meat five days a week. It is the rarest thing for any of us to touch a tin; and the gnashing of teeth when it has to be done is dreadful—for no one who has not lived on them for six months knows what the Hatred of the Tin is. As for exposure, my weakness is certainly the reverse; I am sometimes a month without leaving the verandah—for my sins, be it said! Doubtless, when I go about and, as the Doctor says, "expose myself to malaria," I am in far better health; and I would do so more too—for I do not mean to be silly—but the difficulties are great. However, you see how much the dear Doctor knows of my diet and habits! Malaria practically does not exist in these islands; it is a negligeable quantity. What really bothers us a little is the mosquito affair—the so-called elephantiasis—ask Ross about it. A real romance of natural history, *quoi!*

Hi! stop! you say *The Ebb Tide* is the "working out of an artistic problem of a kind." Well, I should just bet it was! You don't like Attwater. But look at my three rogues; they're all there, I'll go bail. Three types of the bad man, the weak man, and the strong man with a weakness, that are gone through and lived out.

Yes, of course I was sorry for Mataafa, but a good deal sorrier and angrier about the mismanagement of all the white officials. I cannot bear to write about that. Manono all destroyed, one house standing in Apolima, the women stripped, the prisoners beaten with whips—and the women's heads taken—all under white auspices. And for upshot and result of so much shame to the white

powers—Tamasese already conspiring! as I knew and preached in vain must be the case! Well, well, it is no fun to meddle in politics!

I suppose you're right about Simon.[1] But it is Symon throughout in that blessed little volume my father bought for me in Inverness in the year of grace '81, I believe—the trial of James Stewart, with the Jacobite pamphlet and the dying speech appended—out of which the whole of *Davie* has already been begotten, and which I felt it a kind of loyalty to follow. I really ought to have it bound in velvet and gold, if I had any gratitude! and the best of the lark is, that the name of David Balfour is not anywhere within the bounds of it. A pretty curious instance of the genesis of a book. I am delighted at your good word for *David;* I believe the two together make up much the best of my work and perhaps of what is in me. I am not ashamed of them, at least. There is one hitch; instead of three hours between the two parts, I fear there have passed three years over Davie's character; but do not tell anybody; see if they can find it out for themselves; and no doubt his experiences in *Kidnapped* would go far to form him. I would like a copy to go to G. Meredith.

Wednesday.—Well, here is a new move. It is likely I may start with Graham next week and go to Honolulu to meet the other steamer and return: I do believe a fortnight at sea would do me good; yet I am not yet certain. The crowded *up*-steamer sticks in my throat.

Tuesday, 12th Sept.—Yesterday was perhaps the brightest in the annals of Vailima. I got leave from Captain Bickford to have the band of the *Katoomba* come up, and they came, fourteen of 'em, with drum, fife, cymbals and bugles, blue jackets, white caps, and smiling faces. The house was all decorated with scented greenery above and below. We had not only our own nine out-door workers, but a contract party that we took on in charity to pay

[1] Simon Fraser, the Master of Lovat, in *Catriona:* the spelling of his name.

their war-fine; the band besides, as it came up the mountain, had collected a following of children by the way, and we had a picking of Samoan ladies to receive them. Chicken, ham, cake and fruits were served out with coffee and lemonade, and all the afternoon we had rounds of claret negus flavoured with rum and limes. They played to us, they danced, they sang, they tumbled. Our boys came in the end of the verandah and gave *them* a dance for a while. It was anxious work getting this stopped once it had begun, but I knew the band was going on a programme. Finally they gave three cheers for Mr. and Mrs. Stevens, shook hands, formed up and marched off playing—till a kicking horse in the paddock put their pipes out something of the suddenest—we thought the big drum was gone, but Simelé flew to the rescue. And so they wound away down the hill with ever another call of the bugle, leaving us extinct with fatigue, but perhaps the most contented hosts that ever watched the departure of successful guests. Simply impossible to tell how well these blue-jackets behaved; a most interesting lot of men; this education of boys for the navy is making a class, wholly apart—how shall I call them?—a kind of lower-class public school boy, well-mannered, fairly intelligent, sentimental as a sailor. What is more shall be writ on board ship if anywhere.

Please send *Catriona* to G. Meredith.

S.S. Mariposa.—To-morrow I reach Honolulu. Good-morning to your honour. R. L. S.

To Sidney Colvin

In the interval between the last letter and this, the writer had been down with a sharp and prolonged attack of fever at Honolulu, and Mrs. Stevenson had come from Samoa to nurse and take him home.

Waikiki, Honolulu, H. I., Oct. 23rd, 1893.

DEAR COLVIN,—My wife came up on the steamer and we go home together in 2 days. I am practically all right,

only sleepy and tired easily, slept yesterday from 11 to 11.45, from 1 to 2.50, went to bed at 8 P.M., and with an hour's interval slept till 6 A.M., close upon 14 hours out of the 24. We sail to-morrow. I am anxious to get home, though this has been an interesting visit, and politics have been curious indeed to study. We go to P. P. C. on the "Queen" this morning; poor, recluse lady, *abreuvée d'injures qu'elle est.* Had a rather annoying lunch on board the American man-of-war, with a member of the P. G. (provisional government); and a good deal of anti-royalist talk, which I had to sit out—not only for my host's sake, but my fellow guests. At last, I took the lead and changed the conversation. R. L. S.

I am being busted here by party named Hutchinson.[1] Seems good.

[*Vailima—November.*]—Home again, and found all well, thank God. I am perfectly well again and ruddier than the cherry. Please note that 8000 is not bad for a volume of short stories;[2] the *Merry Men* did a good deal worse; the short story never sells. I hope *Catriona* will do; that is the important. The reviews seem mixed and perplexed, and one had the peculiar virtue to make me angry. I am in a fair way to expiscate my family history. Fanny and I had a lovely voyage down, with our new C. J. and the American Land Commissioner, and on the whole, and for these disgusting steamers, a pleasant ship's company. I cannot understand why you don't take to the Hawaii scheme. Do you understand? You cross the Atlantic in six days, and go from 'Frisco to Honolulu in seven. Thirteen days at sea *in all.*—I have no wish to publish *The Ebb Tide* as a book, let it wait. It will look well in the portfolio. I would like a copy, of course, for that end; and to "look upon't again"—which I scarce dare.

[1] The bust was exhibited in the New Gallery Summer Exhibition, 1895.

[2] *Island Nights' Entertainments.*

[*Later.*]—This is disgraceful. I have done nothing; neither work nor letters. On the Mé (May) day, we had a great triumph; our Protestant boys, instead of going with their own villages and families, went of their own accord in the Vailima uniform; Belle made coats for them on purpose to complete the uniform, they having bought the stuff; and they were hailed as they marched in as the Tama-ona—the rich man's children. This is really a score; it means that Vailima is publicly taken as a family. Then we had my birthday feast a week late, owing to diarrhœa on the proper occasion. The feast was laid in the Hall, and was a singular mass of food: 15 pigs, 100 lbs. beef, 100 lbs. pork, and the fruit and filigree in a proportion. We had sixty horse-posts driven in the gate paddock; how many guests I cannot guess, perhaps 150. They came between three and four and left about seven. Seumanu gave me one of his names; and when my name was called at the ava drinking, behold, it was *Au mai taua ma manu-vao!* You would scarce recognise me, if you heard me thus referred to!

Two days after, we hired a carriage in Apia, Fanny, Belle, Lloyd and I, and drove in great style, with a native outrider, to the prison; a huge gift of ava and tobacco under the seats. The prison is now under the *pule* of an Austrian, Captain Wurmbrand, a soldier of fortune in Servia and Turkey, a charming, clever, kindly creature, who is adored "by *his* chiefs" (as he calls them) meaning *our* political prisoners. And we came into the yard, walled about with tinned iron, and drank ava with the prisoners and the captain. It may amuse you to hear how it is proper to drink ava. When the cup is handed you, you reach your arm out somewhat behind you, and slowly pour a libation, saying with somewhat the manner of prayer, "*Ia taumafa e le atua. Ua matagofie le fesilafaga nei.*" "Be it (high-chief) partaken of by the God. How (high chief) beautiful to view is this (high chief) gathering." This pagan practice is very queer. I should say that the

prison ava was of that not very welcome form that we elegantly call spit-ava, but of course there was no escape, and it had to be drunk. Fanny and I rode home, and I moralised by the way. Could we ever stand Europe again? did she appreciate that if we were in London, we should be *actually jostled* in the street? and there was nobody in the whole of Britain who knew how to take ava like a gentleman? 'Tis funny to be thus of two civilisations—or, if you like, of one civilisation and one barbarism. And, as usual, the barbarism is the more engaging.

Colvin, you have to come here and see us in our {native / mortal} spot. I just don't seem to be able to make up my mind to your not coming. By this time, you will have seen Graham, I hope, and he will be able to tell you something about us, and something reliable. I shall feel for the first time as if you knew a little about Samoa after that. Fanny seems to be in the right way now. I must say she is very, very well for her, and complains scarce at all. Yesterday, she went down *sola* (at least accompanied by a groom) to pay a visit; Belle, Lloyd and I went a walk up the mountain road—the great public highway of the island, where you have to go single file. The object was to show Belle that gaudy valley of the Vaisigano which the road follows. If the road is to be made and opened, as our new Chief Justice promises, it will be one of the most beautiful roads in the world. But the point is this: I forgot I had been three months in civilisation, wearing shoes and stockings, and I tell you I suffered on my soft feet; coming home, down hill, on that stairway of loose stones, I could have cried. O yes, another story, I knew I had. The house boys had not been behaving well, so the other night I announced a *fono*, and Lloyd and I went into the boys' quarters, and I talked to them I suppose for half an hour, and Talolo translated; Lloyd was there principally to keep another ear on the interpreter; else there may be dreadful misconceptions. I rubbed all

their ears, except two whom I particularly praised; and one man's wages I announced I had cut down by one half. Imagine his taking this smiling! Ever since, he has been specially attentive and greets me with a face of really heavenly brightness. This is another good sign of their really and fairly accepting me as a chief. When I first came here, if I had fined a man a sixpence, he would have quit work that hour, and now I remove half his income, and he is glad to stay on—nay, does not seem to entertain the possibility of leaving. And this in the face of one particular difficulty—I mean our house in the bush, and no society, and no women society within decent reach.

I think I must give you our staff in a tabular form.

HOUSE	KITCHEN	OUTSIDE
+ o *Sosimo*, provost and butler, and my valet.	+ o *Talolo*, provost and chief cook.	+ o *Henry Simelé*, provost and overseer of outside boys.
	+ o *Iopu*, second cook.	
o *Misifolo*, who is Fanny and Belle's chamberlain.	*Tali*, his wife, no wages.	*Lū.*
	Ti'a, Samoan cook.	*Tasi Sele.*
	Feiloa'i, his child, no wages, likewise no work —Belle's pet.	*Maiele.*
	+ o *Leuelu*, Fanny's boy, gardener, odd jobs.	*Pulu*, who is also our talking man and cries the ava.
	IN APIA	
	+ *Eliga*, washman and daily errand man.	

The crosses mark out the really excellent boys. Ti'a is the man who has just been fined ½ his wages; he is a beautiful old man, the living image of "Fighting Gladiator," my favourite statue—but a dreadful humbug. I think we keep him on a little on account of his looks. This sign o marks those who have been two years or upwards in the family. I note all my old boys have the cross of honour, except Misifolo; well, poor dog, he does his best, I suppose. You should see him scour. It is a remark that has often been made by visitors: you never see a Samoan run, except at Vailima. Do you not suppose that makes me proud?

I am pleased to see what a success *The Wrecker* was, having already in little more than a year outstripped *The Master of Ballantrae.*

About *David Balfour* in two volumes, do see that they make it a decent-looking book, and tell me, do you think a little historical appendix would be of service? Lang bleats for one, and I thought I might address it to him as a kind of open letter.

Dec. 4th.—No time after all. Good-bye. R. L. S.

To J. Horne Stevenson

The following refers again to the introduction to the history of his own family which Stevenson was then preparing under the title *A Family of Engineers.* The correspondent was a specialist in genealogical research. I give this letter as a sample of many which passed between these two namesakes on this subject; omitting the remainder as too technical to be of general interest.

Vailima, Samoa, November 5th, 1893.

MY DEAR STEVENSON,—A thousand thanks for your voluminous and delightful collections. Baxter—so soon as it is ready—will let you see a proof of my introduction, which is only sent out as a sprat to catch whales. And you will find I have a good deal of what you have, only mine in a perfectly desultory manner, as is necessary to

an exile. My uncle's pedigree is wrong; there was never a Stevenson of Caldwell, of course, but they were tenants of the Mures; the farm held by them is in my introduction; and I have already written to Charles Baxter to have a search made in the Register House. I hope he will have had the inspiration to put it under your surveillance. Your information as to your own family is intensely interesting, and I should not wonder but what you and we and old John Stevenson, "land labourer in the parish of Dailly," came all of the same stock. Ayrshire—and probably Cunningham—seems to be the home of the race—our part of it. From the distribution of the name—which your collections have so much extended without essentially changing my knowledge of—we seem rather pointed to a British origin. What you say of the Engineers is fresh to me, and must be well thrashed out. This introduction of it will take a long while to walk about!—as perhaps I may be tempted to let it become long; after all, I am writing *this* for my own pleasure solely. Greetings to you and other Speculatives of our date, long bygone, alas!—Yours very sincerely, ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

P.S.—I have a different version of my grandfather's arms—or my father had if I could find it. R. L. S.

TO JOHN P——N

The next two numbers are in answer to letters of appreciation received from two small boys in England, whose mother desires that they should remain nameless.

Vailima, Samoa, December 3rd, 1893.

DEAR JOHNNIE,—Well, I must say you seem to be a tremendous fellow! Before I was eight I used to write stories—or dictate them at least—and I had produced an excellent history of Moses, for which I got £1 from an uncle; but I had never gone the length of a play, so you

have beaten me fairly on my own ground. I hope you may continue to do so, and thanking you heartily for your nice letter, I shall beg you to believe me yours truly,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

To RUSSELL P——N

Vailima, Samoa, December 3rd, 1893.

DEAR RUSSELL,—I have to thank you very much for your capital letter, which came to hand here in Samoa along with your mother's. When you "grow up and write stories like me," you will be able to understand that there is scarce anything more painful than for an author to hold a pen; he has to do it so much that his heart sickens and his fingers ache at the sight or touch of it; so that you will excuse me if I do not write much, but remain (with compliments and greetings from one Scot to another—though I was not born in Ceylon—you're ahead of me there).—Yours very truly,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

To ALISON CUNNINGHAM

Vailima, December 5, 1893.

MY DEAREST CUMMY,—This goes to you with a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. The Happy New Year anyway, for I think it should reach you about *Noor's Day*. I dare say it may be cold and frosty. Do you remember when you used to take me out of bed in the early morning, carry me to the back windows, show me the hills of Fife, and quote to me

> "A' the hills are covered wi' snaw,
> An' winter's noo come fairly"?

There is not much chance of that here! I wonder how

my mother is going to stand the winter. If she can, it will be a very good thing for her. We are in that part of the year which I like the best—the Rainy or Hurricane Season. "When it is good, it is very, very good; and when it is bad, it is horrid," and our fine days are certainly fine like heaven; such a blue of the sea, such green of the trees, and such crimson of the hibiscus flowers, you never saw; and the air as mild and gentle as a baby's breath, and yet not hot!

The mail is on the move, and I must let up.—With much love, I am, your laddie, R. L. S.

To Charles Baxter

The following quotes the extract, from Fountainhall's "Decisions of the Lords of Council, etc.," which suggested to Stevenson the romance of Cameronian days and the Darien adventure of which, under the title of *Heathercat*, he only lived to write the first few introductory chapters (see vol. xxi. p. 177, of this edition).

6*th December* 1893.

"*October* 25, 1685.—At Privy Council, George Murray, Lieutenant of the King's Guard, and others, did, on the 21st of September last, obtain a clandestine order of Privy Council to apprehend the person of Janet Pringle, daughter to the late Clifton, and she having retired out of the way upon information, he got an order against Andrew Pringle, her uncle, to produce her. . . . But she having married Andrew Pringle, her uncle's son (to disappoint all their designs of selling her), a boy of thirteen years old." But my boy is to be fourteen, so I extract no further.—Fountainhall, i. 320.

"*May* 6, 1685.—Wappus Pringle of Clifton was still alive after all, and in prison for debt, and transacts with Lieutenant Murray, giving security for 7000 marks."—i. 372.

No, it seems to have been *her* brother who had succeeded.

MY DEAR CHARLES.—The above is my story, and I wonder if any light can be thrown on it. I prefer the girl's father dead; and the question is, How in that case could Lieutenant George Murray get his order to "apprehend" and his power to "sell" her in marriage?

Or—might Lieutenant G. be her tutor, and she fugitive to the Pringles, and on the discovery of her whereabouts hastily married?

A good legal note on these points is very ardently desired by me; it will be the corner-stone of my novel.

This is for—I am quite wrong to tell you—for you will tell others—and nothing will teach you that all my schemes are in the air, and vanish and reappear again like shapes in the clouds—it is for *Heathercat:* whereof the first volume will be called *The Killing Time*, and I believe I have authorities ample for that. But the second volume is to be called (I believe) *Darien*, and for that I want, I fear, a good deal of truck:—

Darien Papers,
Carstairs Papers,
Marchmont Papers,
Jerviswoode Correspondence,

I hope may do me. Some sort of general history of the Darien affair (if there is a decent one, which I misdoubt), it would also be well to have—the one with most details, if possible. It is singular how obscure to me this decade of Scots history remains, 1690–1700—a deuce of a want of light and grouping to it! However, I believe I shall be mostly out of Scotland in my tale; first in Carolina, next in Darien. I want also—I am the daughter of the horse-leech truly—"Black's new large map of Scotland," sheets 3, 4, and 5, a 7s. 6d. touch. I believe, if you can get the

Caldwell Papers,

they had better come also; and if there be any reasonable work—but no, I must call a halt. . . .

I fear the song looks doubtful, but I'll consider of it, and I can promise you some reminiscences which it will amuse me to write, whether or not it will amuse the public to read of them. But it's an unco business to supply deid-heid coapy.

To J. M. Barrie

Vailima, Samoa, December 7th, 1893.

MY DEAR BARRIE,—I have received duly the *magnum opus*, and it really is a *magnum opus*.[1] It is a beautiful specimen of Clark's printing, paper sufficient, and the illustrations all my fancy painted. But the particular flower of the flock to whom I have hopelessly lost my heart is Tibby Birse. I must have known Tibby Birse when she was a servant's mantua-maker in Edinburgh and answered to the name of Miss *Broddie*. She used to come and sew with my nurse, sitting with her legs crossed in a masculine manner; and swinging her foot emphatically, she used to pour forth a perfectly unbroken stream of gossip. I didn't hear it, I was immersed in far more important business with a box of bricks, but the recollection of that thin, perpetual, shrill sound of a voice has echoed in my ears sinsyne. I am bound to say she was younger than Tibbie, but there is no mistaking that and the indescribable and eminently Scottish expression.

I have been very much prevented of late, having carried out thoroughly to my own satisfaction two considerable illnesses, had a birthday, and visited Honolulu, where politics are (if possible) a shade more exasperating than they are with us. I am told that it was just when I was on the point of leaving that I received your superlative epistle about the cricket eleven. In that case it is impossible I should have answered it, which is inconsistent with

[1] *The Window in Thrums*, with illustrations by W. Hole, R.S.A. Hodder and Stoughton. 1892.

my own recollection of the fact. What *I* remember is, that I sat down under your immediate inspiration and wrote an answer in every way worthy. If I didn't, as it seems proved that I couldn't, it will never be done now. However, I did the next best thing, I equipped my cousin Graham Balfour with a letter of introduction, and from him, if you know how—for he is rather of the Scottish character—you may elicit all the information you can possibly wish to have as to us and ours. Do not be bluffed off by the somewhat stern and monumental first impression that he may make upon you. He is one of the best fellows in the world, and the same sort of fool that we are, only better-looking, with all the faults of Vailimans and some of his own—I say nothing about virtues.

I have lately been returning to my wallowing in the mire. When I was a child, and indeed until I was nearly a man, I consistently read Covenanting books. Now that I am a grey-beard—or would be, if I could raise the beard —I have returned, and for weeks back have read little else but Wodrow, Walker, Shields, etc. Of course this is with an idea of a novel, but in the course of it I made a very curious discovery. I have been accustomed to hear refined and intelligent critics—those who know so much better what we are than we do ourselves,—trace down my literary descent from all sorts of people, including Addison, of whom I could never read a word. Well, laigh i' your lug, sir—the clue was found. My style is from the Covenanting writers. Take a particular case—the fondness for rhymes. I don't know of any English prose-writer who rhymes except by accident, and then a stone had better be tied around his neck and himself cast into the sea. But my Covenanting buckies rhyme all the time—a beautiful example of the unconscious rhyme above referred to.

Do you know, and have you really tasted, these delightful works ? If not, it should be remedied ; there is enough of the Auld Licht in you to be ravished.

I suppose you know that success has so far attended my banners—my political banners I mean, and not my literary. In conjunction with the Three Great Powers I have succeeded in getting rid of My President and My Chief-Justice. They've gone home, the one to Germany, the other to Souwegia. I hear little echoes of footfalls of their departing footsteps through the medium of the newspapers. . . .

Whereupon I make you my salute with the firm remark that it is time to be done with trifling and give us a great book, and my ladies fall into line with me to pay you a most respectful courtesy, and we all join in the cry, " Come to Vailima ! "

My dear sir, your soul's health is in it—you will never do the great book, you will never cease to work in L., etc., till you come to Vailima.

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To R. Le Gallienne

Vailima, Samoa, December 28th, 1893.

DEAR MR. LE GALLIENNE,—I have received some time ago, through our friend Miss Taylor, a book of yours. But that was by no means my first introduction to your name. The same book had stood already on my shelves ; I had read articles of yours in the Academy ; and by a piece of constructive criticism (which I trust was sound) had arrived at the conclusion that you were " Log-roller." Since then I have seen your beautiful verses to your wife. You are to conceive me, then, as only too ready to make the acquaintance of a man who loved good literature and could make it. I had to thank you, besides, for a triumphant exposure of a paradox of my own : the literary-prostitute disappeared from view at a phrase of yours—" The essence is not in the pleasure but the sale." True you are right, I was wrong ; the author is not the whore

but the libertine ; and yet I shall let the passage stand. It is an error, but it illustrated the truth for which I was contending, that literature—painting—all art, are no other than pleasures, which we turn into trades.

And more than all this, I had, and I have to thank you for the intimate loyalty you have shown to myself ; for the eager welcome you give to what is good—for the courtly tenderness with which you touch on my defects. I begin to grow old ; I have given my top note, I fancy ; —and I have written too many books. The world begins to be weary of the old booth ; and if not weary, familiar with the familiarity that breeds contempt. I do not know that I am sensitive to criticism, if it be hostile ; I am sensitive indeed, when it is friendly ; and when I read such criticism as yours, I am emboldened to go on and praise God.

You are still young, and you may live to do much. The little, artificial popularity of style in England tends, I think, to die out ; the British pig returns to his true love, the love of the styleless, of the shapeless, of the slapdash and the disorderly. There is trouble coming, I think ; and you may have to hold the fort for us in evil days.

Lastly, let me apologise for the crucifixion that I am inflicting on you (*bien à contre-cœur*) by my bad writing. I was once the best of writers ; landladies, puzzled as to my " trade," used to have their honest bosoms set at rest by a sight of a page of manuscript.—" Ah," they would say, " no wonder they pay you for that " ;—and when I sent it in to the printers, it was given to the boys ! I was about thirty-nine, I think, when I had a turn of scrivener's palsy ; my hand got worse ; and for the first time, I received clean proofs. But it has gone beyond that now. I know I am like my old friend James Payn, a terror to correspondents ; and you would not believe the care with which this has been written.—Believe me to be, very sincerely yours, ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

To Mrs. A. Baker

The next is in answer to a request for permission to print some of the writings of R. L. S. in Braille type for the use of the blind.

December 1893.

DEAR MADAM,—There is no trouble, and I wish I could help instead. As it is, I fear I am only going to put you to trouble and vexation. This Braille writing is a kind of consecration, and I would like if I could to have your copy perfect. The two volumes are to be published as Vols. I. and II. of *The Adventures of David Balfour.* 1st, *Kidnapped;* 2nd, *Catriona.* I am just sending home a corrected *Kidnapped* for this purpose to Messrs. Cassell, and in order that I may if possible be in time, I send it to you first of all. Please, as soon as you have noted the changes, forward the same to Cassell and Co., La Belle Sauvage Yard, Ludgate Hill.

I am writing to them by this mail to send you *Catriona.*

You say, dear madam, you are good enough to say, it is "a keen pleasure" to you to bring my book within the reach of the blind.

Conceive then what it is to me! and believe me, sincerely yours, ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

I was a barren tree before,
I blew a quenchèd coal,
I could not, on their midnight shore,
The lonely blind console.

A moment, lend your hand, I bring
My sheaf for you to bind,
And you can teach my words to sing
In the darkness of the blind.

R. L. S.

To Henry James

Apia, December, 1893.

MY DEAR HENRY JAMES,—The mail has come upon me like an armed man three days earlier than was expected; and the Lord help me! It is impossible I should answer anybody the way they should be. Your jubilation over *Catriona* did me good, and still more the subtlety and truth of your remark on the starving of the visual sense in that book. 'Tis true, and unless I make the greater effort—and am, as a step to that, convinced of its necessity—it will be more true I fear in the future. I *hear* people talking, and I *feel* them acting, and that seems to me to be fiction. My two aims may be described as—

1*st*. War to the adjective.
2*nd*. Death to the optic nerve.

Admitted we live in an age of the optic nerve in literature. For how many centuries did literature get along without a sign of it? However, I'll consider your letter.

How exquisite is your character of the critic in *Essays in London!* I doubt if you have done any single thing so satisfying as a piece of style and of insight—Yours ever, R. L. S.

To Sidney Colvin

Recounting a scene of gratitude for bounty shown by him to the prisoners in Apia gaol.

[*Vailima, December* 1893.]

MY DEAR COLVIN,—One page out of my picture book I must give you. Fine burning day; ½ past two P.M. We four begin to rouse up from reparatory slumbers, yawn, and groan, get a cup of tea, and miserably dress: we have had a party the day before, X'mas Day, with all

the boys absent but one, and latterly two; we had cooked all day long, a cold dinner, and lo! at two our guests began to arrive, though dinner was not till six; they were sixteen, and fifteen slept the night and breakfasted. Conceive, then, how unwillingly we climb on our horses and start off in the hottest part of the afternoon to ride 4½ miles, attend a native feast in the gaol, and ride four and a half miles back. But there is no help for it. I am a sort of father of the political prisoners, and have *charge d'âmes* in that riotously absurd establishment, Apia Gaol. The twenty-three (I think it is) chiefs act as under gaolers. The other day they told the Captain of an attempt to escape. One of the lesser political prisoners the other day effected a swift capture, while the Captain was trailing about with the warrant; the man came to see what was wanted; came, too, flanked by the former gaoler; my prisoner offers to show him the dark cell, shoves him in, and locks the door. "Why do you do that?" cries the former gaoler. "A warrant," says he. Finally, the chiefs actually feed the soldiery who watch them!

The gaol is a wretched little building, containing a little room, and three cells, on each side of a central passage; it is surrounded by a fence of corrugated iron, and shows, over the top of that, only a gable end with the inscription *O le Fale Puipui*. It is on the edge of the mangrove swamp, and is reached by a sort of causeway of turf. When we drew near, we saw the gates standing open and a prodigious crowd outside—I mean prodigious for Apia, perhaps a hundred and fifty people. The two sentries at the gate stood to arms passively, and there seemed to be a continuous circulation inside and out. The captain came to meet us; our boy, who had been sent ahead was there to take the horses; and we passed inside the court which was full of food, and rang continuously to the voice of the caller of gifts; I had to blush a little later when my own present came, and I heard my one pig and eight miserable pine-apples being

counted out like guineas. In the four corners of the yard and along one wall, there are make-shift, dwarfish, Samoan houses or huts, which have been run up since Captain Wurmbrand came to accommodate the chiefs. Before that they were all crammed into the six cells, and locked in for the night, some of them with dysentery. They are wretched constructions enough, but sanctified by the presence of chiefs. We heard a man corrected loudly to-day for saying "*Fale*" of one of them; "*Maota*," roared the highest chief present—"palace." About eighteen chiefs, gorgeously arrayed, stood up to greet us, and led us into one of these *maotas*, where you may be sure we had to crouch, almost to kneel, to enter, and where a row of pretty girls occupied one side to make the ava (kava). The highest chief present was a magnificent man, as high chiefs usually are; I find I cannot describe him; his face is full of shrewdness and authority; his figure like Ajax; his name Auilua. He took the head of the building and put Belle on his right hand. Fanny was called first for the ava (kava). Our names were called in English style, the high-chief wife of Mr. St—(an unpronounceable something); Mrs. Straw, and the like. And when we went into the other house to eat, we found we were seated alternately with chiefs about the—table, I was about to say, but rather floor. Everything was to be done European style with a vengeance! We were the only whites present, except Wurmbrand, and still I had no suspicion of the truth. They began to take off their ulas (necklaces of scarlet seeds) and hang them about our necks; we politely resisted, and were told that the king (who had stopped off their *siva*) had sent down to the prison a message to the effect that he was to give a dinner to-morrow, and wished their second-hand ulas for it. Some of them were content; others not. There was a ring of anger in the boy's voice, as he told us we were to wear them past the king's house. Dinner over, I must say they are moderate caters at a feast, we returned to the ava house; and then

the curtain drew suddenly up upon the set scene. We took our seats, and Auilua began to give me a present, recapitulating each article as he gave it out, with some appropriate comment. He called me several times "their only friend," said they were all in slavery, had no money, and these things were all made by the hands of their families—nothing bought; he had one phrase, in which I heard his voice rise up to a note of triumph: "This is a present from the poor prisoners to the rich man." Thirteen pieces of tapa, some of them surprisingly fine, one I think unique; thirty fans of every shape and colour; a kava cup, etc., etc. At first Auilua conducted the business with weighty gravity; but before the end of the thirty fans, his comments began to be humorous. When it came to a little basket, he said: "Here was a little basket for Tusitala to put sixpence in, when he could get hold of one"—with a delicious grimace. I answered as best as I was able through a miserable interpreter; and all the while, as I went on, I heard the crier outside in the court calling my gift of food, which I perceived was to be Gargantuan. I had brought but three boys with me. It was plain that they were wholly overpowered. We proposed to send for our gifts on the morrow; but no, said the interpreter, that would never do; they must go away to-day, Mulinuu must see my porters taking away the gifts,—"make 'em jella," quoth the interpreter. And I began to see the reason of this really splendid gift; one half, gratitude to me—one half, a wipe at the king.

And now, to introduce darker colours, you must know this visit of mine to the gaol was just a little bit risky; we had several causes for anxiety; it *might* have been put up, to connect with a Tamasese rising. Tusitala and his family would be good hostages. On the other hand, there were the Mulinuu people all about. We could see the anxiety of Captain Wurmbrand, no less anxious to have us go, than he had been to see us come; he was deadly white and plainly had a bad headache, in the noisy scene.

Presently, the noise grew uproarious ; there was a rush at the gate—a rush *in*, not a rush *out*—where the two sentries still stood passive ; Auilua leaped from his place (it was then that I got the name of Ajax for him) and the next moment we heard his voice roaring and saw his mighty figure swaying to and fro in the hurly-burly. As the deuce would have it, we could not understand a word of what was going on. It might be nothing more than the ordinary "grab racket" with which a feast commonly concludes ; it might be something worse. We made what arrangements we could for my tapa, fans, etc., as well as for my five pigs, my masses of fish, taro, etc., and with great dignity, and ourselves laden with ulas and other decorations, passed between the sentries among the howling mob to our horses. All's well that ends well. Owing to Fanny and Belle, we had to walk ; and, as Lloyd said, "he had at last ridden in a circus." The whole length of Apia we paced our triumphal progress, past the king's palace, past the German firm at Sogi—you can follow it on the map—amidst admiring exclamations of "*Mawaia*" —beautiful—it may be rendered "O my! ain't they dandy"—until we turned up at last into our road as the dusk deepened into night. It was really exciting. And there is one thing sure : no such feast was ever made for a single family, and no such present ever given to a single white man. It is something to have been the hero of it. And whatever other ingredients there were, undoubtedly gratitude was present. As money value I have actually gained on the transaction!

Your note arrived ; little profit, I must say. Scott has already put his nose in, in *St. Ives*, sir ; but his appearance is not yet complete ; nothing is in that romance, except the story. I have to announce that I am off work, probably for six months. I must own that I have overworked bitterly—overworked—there, that's legible. My hand is a thing that was, and in the meanwhile so are my brains. And here, in the very midst, comes a plausible scheme

to make Vailima pay, which will perhaps let me into considerable expense just when I don't want it. You know the vast cynicism of my view of affairs, and how readily and (as some people say) with how much gusto I take the darker view?

Why do you not send me Jerome K. Jerome's paper, and let me see *The Ebb Tide* as a serial? It is always very important to see a thing in different presentments. I want every number. Politically we begin the new year with every expectation of a bust in 2 or 3 days, a bust which may spell destruction to Samoa. I have written to Baxter about his proposal.[1]

[1] The scheme of the Edinburgh Edition.

XIV

LIFE IN SAMOA—*Concluded*

FOURTH YEAR AT VAILIMA—THE END

JANUARY-DECEMBER 1894

THIS new year began for Stevenson with an illness which seemed to leave none of the usual lowering consequences, and for Samoa with fresh rumours of war, which were not realised until the autumn, and then—at least in the shape of serious hostilities—in the district of Atua only and not in his own. On the whole Stevenson's bodily health and vigour kept at a higher level than during the previous year. But for serious imaginative writing he found himself still unfit, and the sense that his old facility had for the time being failed him caused him much inward misgiving. In his correspondence the misgiving mood was allowed to appear pretty freely; but in personal intercourse his high spirits seemed to his family and visitors as unfailing as ever. Several things happened during the year to give him peculiar pleasure: first, at the beginning of the year, the news of Mr. Baxter's carefully prepared scheme of the Edinburgh Edition, and of its acceptance by the publishers concerned. On this subject much correspondence naturally passed between him and Mr. Baxter and myself, over and above that which is here published; and finally he resolved to leave all the details of the execution to us. By the early autumn the financial success of the scheme

was fully assured and made known to him by cable; but he did not seem altogether to realise the full measure of relief from money anxieties which the assurance was meant to convey to him. Other pleasurable circumstances were the return of Mr. Graham Balfour after a prolonged absence; the visit of a spirited and accomplished young English man of business and of letters, Mr. Sidney Lysaght (see below, pp. 385, 388, etc.); and the frequent society of the officers of H.M.S. *Curaçoa*, with whom he was on terms of particular regard and cordiality. Lastly, he was very deeply touched and gratified by the action of the native political prisoners, towards whom he had shown much thoughtful kindness during their months of detention, in volunteering as a testimony of gratitude after their release to re-make with their own hands the branch road leading to his house: "the Road of Loving Hearts," as it came to be christened. Soon afterwards, the anniversaries of his own birthday and of the American Thanksgiving feast brought evidences hardly less welcome, after so much contention and annoyance as the island affairs and politics had involved him in, of the honour and affection in which he was held by all that was best in the white community. By each succeeding mail came stronger proofs from home of the manner in which men of letters of the younger generation had come to regard him as a master, an example, and a friend.

But in spite of all these causes of pleasure, his letters showed that his old invincible spirit of inward cheerfulness was beginning not infrequently to give way to moods of depression and overstrained feeling. The importunity of these moods was no doubt due to some physical premonition that his vital powers, so frail from the cradle and always with so cheerful a courage overtaxed, were near exhaus-

tion. During the first months of the year he attempted little writing; in the late spring and early summer his work was chiefly on the annals of his family and on the tale *St. Ives*. The latter he found uphill work: after the first ten or twelve chapters, which are in his happiest vein, the narrative, as he himself was painfully aware, began to flag. Towards the end of October he gave it up for the time being and turned to a more arduous task, the tragic *Weir of Hermiston*. On this theme he felt his inspiration return, and during the month of November and the first days of December wrought once more at the full pitch of his powers and in the conscious delight of their exercise. On the third of December, after a morning of happy work and pleasant correspondence, he was seen gazing long and wistfully toward the forest-clad mountain, on a ledge of which he had desired that he should be buried. In the afternoon he brought his morning's work to his wife, the most exacting of his critics; asked her whether it was not well done; and in her glow of admiring assent found his confirmation and his reward. Nevertheless she could not throw off an oppressive sense of coming calamity. He was reassuring her with gay and laughing talk when the sudden rupture of a blood-vessel in the brain laid him almost in a moment unconscious at her feet; and before two hours were over he had passed away. All the world knows how his body was carried by the loving hands of his native servants to the burial-place of his choice, and rests there with the words of his own requiem engraved on his tomb—the words which we have seen him putting on paper when he was at grips with death fifteen years before in California—

> "Home is the sailor, home from sea,
> And the hunter home from the hill."

To Charles Baxter

Mr. Baxter, after much preliminary consideration and inquiry, had matured and submitted to Stevenson the scheme of the Edinburgh edition, to which this letter is his reply. The paper on *Treasure Island* appeared in the Idler for August 1889, and was afterwards reprinted in the miscellany *My First Book* (Chatto and Windus, 1894). See Edinburgh edition, *Miscellanies*, vol. iv. p. 285.

1*st January* '94.

MY DEAR CHARLES,—I am delighted with your idea, and first, I will here give an amended plan and afterwards give you a note of some of the difficulties.

[Plan of the Edinburgh edition—14 vols.]

. . . It may be a question whether my Times letters might not be appended to the *Footnote* with a note of the dates of discharge of Cedercrantz and Pilsach.

I am particularly pleased with this idea of yours, because I am come to a dead stop. I never can remember how bad I have been before, but at any rate I am bad enough just now, I mean as to literature ; in health I am well and strong. I take it I shall be six months before I'm heard of again, and this time I could put in to some advantage in revising the text and (if it were thought desirable) writing prefaces. I do not know how many of them might be thought desirable. I have written a paper on *Treasure Island*, which is to appear shortly. *Master of Ballantrae*—I have one drafted. *The Wrecker* is quite sufficiently done already with the last chapter, but I suppose an historic introduction to *David Balfour* is quite unavoidable. *Prince Otto* I don't think I could say anything about, and *Black Arrow* don't want to. But it is probable I could say something to the volume of *Travels*. In the verse business I can do just what I like better than anything else, and extend *Underwoods* with a lot of unpublished stuff. *À propos*, if I were to get printed off a very few poems which are somewhat too intimate for the

public, could you get them run up in some luxuous manner, so that fools might be induced to buy them in just a sufficient quantity to pay expenses and the thing remain still in a manner private? We could supply photographs of the illustrations—and the poems are of Vailima and the family—I should much like to get this done as a surprise for Fanny. R. L. S.

To H. B. Baildon

Vailima, January 15th, 1894.

MY DEAR BAILDON,—Last mail brought your book and its Dedication. "Frederick Street and the gardens, and the short-lived Jack o' Lantern," are again with me—and the note of the east wind, and Froebel's voice, and the smell of soup in Thomson's stair. Truly, you had no need to put yourself under the protection of any other saint, were that saint our Tamate himself! Yourself were enough, and yourself coming with so rich a sheaf.

For what is this that you say about the Muses? They have certainly never better inspired you than in "Jael and Sisera," and "Herodias and John the Baptist," good stout poems, fiery and sound. "'Tis but a mask and behind it chuckles the God of the Garden," I shall never forget. By the by, an error of the press, page 49, line 4, "No infant's lesson are the ways of God." *The* is dropped.

And this reminds me you have a bad habit which is to be comminated in my theory of letters. Same page, two lines lower: "But the vulture's track" is surely as fine to the ear as "But vulture's track," and this latter version has a dreadful baldness. The reader goes on with a sense of impoverishment, of unnecessary sacrifice; he has been robbed by footpads, and goes scouting for his lost article! Again, in the second Epode, these fine verses would surely sound much finer if they began, "As a hardy climber who has set his heart," than with the jejune "As hardy climber."

I do not know why you permit yourself this licence with grammar; you show, in so many pages, that you are superior to the paltry sense of rhythm which usually dictates it—as though some poetaster had been suffered to correct the poet's text. By the way, I confess to a heartfelt weakness for *Auriculas*.—Believe me the very grateful and characteristic pick-thank, but still sincere and affectionate, ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

To W. H. Low

Vailima, January 15th, 1894.

MY DEAR LOW,—. . . Pray you, stoop your proud head, and sell yourself to some Jew magazine, and make the visit out. I assure you, this is the spot for a sculptor or painter. This, and no other—I don't say to stay there, but to come once and get the living colour into them. I am used to it; I do not notice it; rather prefer my grey, freezing recollections of Scotland; but there it is, and every morning is a thing to give thanks for, and every night another—bar when it rains, of course.

About *The Wrecker*—rather late days, and I still suspect I had somehow offended you; however, all's well that ends well, and I am glad I am forgiven—did you not fail to appreciate the attitude of Dodd? He was a fizzle and a stick, he knew it, he knew nothing else, and there is an undercurrent of bitterness in him. And then the problem that Pinkerton laid down: why the artist can *do nothing else?* is one that continually exercises myself. He cannot: granted. But Scott could. And Montaigne. And Julius Cæsar. And many more. And why can't R. L. S.? Does it not amaze you? It does me. I think of the Renaissance fellows, and their all-round human sufficiency, and compare it with the ineffable smallness of the field in which we labour and in which we do so little. I think *David Balfour* a nice little book,

and very artistic, and just the thing to occupy the leisure of a busy man; but for the top flower of a man's life it seems to me inadequate. Small is the word; it is a small age, and I am of it. I could have wished to be otherwise busy in this world. I ought to have been able to build lighthouses and write *David Balfours* too. *Hinc illae lacrymae.* I take my own case as most handy, but it is as illustrative of my quarrel with the age. We take all these pains, and we don't do as well as Michael Angelo or Leonardo, or even Fielding, who was an active magistrate, or Richardson, who was a busy bookseller. *J'ai honte pour nous;* my ears burn.

I am amazed at the effect which this Chicago exhibition has produced upon you and others. It set Mrs. Fairchild literally mad—to judge by her letters. And I wish I had seen anything so influential. I suppose there was an aura, a halo, some sort of effulgency about the place; for here I find you louder than the rest. Well, it may be there is a time coming; and I wonder, when it comes, whether it will be a time of little, exclusive, one-eyed rascals like you and me, or parties of the old stamp who can paint and fight, and write and keep books of double entry, and sculp, and scalp. It might be. You have a lot of stuff in the kettle, and a great deal of it Celtic. I have changed my mind progressively about England: practically the whole of Scotland is Celtic, and the western half of England, and all Ireland, and the Celtic blood makes a rare blend for art. If it is stiffened up with Latin blood, you get the French. We were less lucky: we had only Scandinavians, themselves decidedly artistic, and the Low-German lot. However, that is a good starting-point, and with all the other elements in your crucible, it may come to something great very easily. I wish you would hurry up and let me see it. Here is a long while I have been waiting for something *good* in art; and what have I seen? Zola's *Débâcle* and a few of Kipling's tales. Are you a reader of Barbey d'Aurévilly? He is a never-

failing source of pleasure to me, for my sins, I suppose. What a work is the *Rideau Cramoisi!* and *L'Ensorcelée!* and *Le Chevalier Des Touches!*

This is degenerating into mere twaddle. So please remember us all most kindly to Mrs. Low, and believe me ever yours, ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

P.S.—Were all your privateers voiceless in the war of 1812? Did *no one* of them write memoirs? I shall have to do my privateer from chic, if you can't help me.[1] My application to Scribner has been quite in vain. See if you can get hold of some historic sharp in the club, and tap him; they must some of them have written memoirs or notes of some sort; perhaps still unprinted; if that be so, get them copied for me. R. L. S.

To SIDNEY COLVIN

Vailima, Jan. 29th, 1894.

MY DEAR COLVIN,—I had fully intended for your education and moral health to fob you off with the meanest possible letter this month, and unfortunately I find I will have to treat you to a good long account of matters here. I believe I have told you before about Tui-ma-le-alii-fano and my taking him down to introduce him to the Chief Justice. Well, Tui came back to Vailima one day in the blackest sort of spirits, saying the war was decided, that he also must join in the fight, and that there was no hope whatever of success. He must fight as a point of honour for his family and country; and in his case, even if he escaped on the field of battle, deportation was the least to be looked for. He said he had a letter of complaint from the Great Council of A'ana which he wished to lay

[1] This question is with a view to the adventures of the hero in *St. Ives*, who according to Stevenson's original plan was to have been picked up from his foundered balloon by an American privateer.

before the Chief Justice ; and he asked me to accompany him as if I were his nurse. We went down about dinner time ; and by the way received from a lurking native the famous letter in an official blue envelope gummed up to the edges. It proved to be a declaration of war, quite formal, but with some variations that really made you bounce. White residents were directly threatened, bidden to have nothing to do with the King's party, not to receive their goods in their houses, etc., under pain of an accident. However, the Chief Justice took it very wisely and mildly, and between us, he and I and Tui made up a plan which has proved successful—so far. The war is over—fifteen chiefs are this morning undergoing a curious double process of law, comparable to a court martial ; in which their complaints are to be considered, and if possible righted, while their conduct is to be criticised, perhaps punished. Up to now, therefore, it has been a most successful policy ; but the danger is before us. My own feeling would decidedly be that all would be spoiled by a single execution. The great hope after all lies in the knotless, rather flaccid character of the people. These are no Maoris. All the powers that Cedercrantz let go by disuse the new C. J. is stealthily and boldly taking back again ; perhaps some others also. He has shamed the chiefs in Mulinuu into a law against taking heads, with a punishment of six years' imprisonment and, for a chief, degradation. To him has been left the sole conduct of this anxious and decisive inquiry. If the natives stand it, why, well ! But I am nervous.

To H. B. Baildon

Vailima, January 30th, 1894.

MY DEAR BAILDON,—"Call not blessed."—Yes, if I could die just now, or say in half a year, I should have had a splendid time of it on the whole. But it gets a little stale, and my work will begin to senesce ; and

parties to shy bricks at me; and now it begins to look as if I should survive to see myself impotent and forgotten. It's a pity suicide is not thought the ticket in the best circles.

But your letter goes on to congratulate me on having done the one thing I am a little sorry for; a little—not much—for my father himself lived to think that I had been wiser than he. But the cream of the jest is that I have lived to change my mind; and think that he was wiser than I. Had I been an engineer, and literature my amusement, it would have been better perhaps. I pulled it off, of course, I won the wager, and it is pleasant while it lasts; but how long will it last? I don't know, say the Bells of Old Bow.

All of which goes to show that nobody is quite sane in judging himself. Truly, had I given way and gone in for engineering, I should be dead by now. Well, the gods know best.

. . . I hope you got my letter about the *Rescue*.—Adieu. R. L. S.

True for you about the benefit: except by kisses, jests, song, *et hoc genus omne*, man *cannot* convey benefit to another. The universal benefactor has been there before him.

To Sidney Colvin

Feb. 1894.

DEAR COLVIN,—By a reaction, when your letter is a little decent, mine is to be naked and unashamed. We have been much exercised. No one can prophesy here, of course, and the balance still hangs trembling, but I *think* it will go for peace.

The mail was very late this time: hence the paltriness of this note. When it came and I had read it, I retired with *The Ebb Tide* and read it all before I slept.

I did not dream it was near as good ; I am afraid I think it excellent. A little indecision about Attwater, not much. It gives me great hope, as I see I *can* work in that constipated, mosaic manner, which is what I have to do just now with *Weir of Hermiston.*

We have given a ball ; I send you a paper describing the event. We have two guests in the house, Captain-Count Wurmbrand and Monsieur Albert de Lautreppe. Lautreppe is awfully nice—a quiet, gentlemanly fellow, *gonflé de rêves,* as he describes himself—once a sculptor in the atelier of Henry Crosse, he knows something of art, and is really a resource to me.

Letter from Meredith very kind. Have you seen no more of Graham ?

What about my Grandfather ? The family history will grow to be quite a chapter.

I suppose I am growing sensitive ; perhaps, by living among barbarians, I expect more civility. Look at this from the author of a very interesting and laudatory critique. He gives quite a false description of something of mine, and talks about my " insolence." Frankly, I supposed " insolence " to be a tapu word. I do not use it to a gentleman, I would not write it of a gentleman : I may be wrong, but I believe we did not write it of a gentleman in old days, and in my view he (clever fellow as he is) wants to be kicked for applying it to me. By writing a novel—even a bad one—I do not make myself a criminal for anybody to insult. This may amuse you. But either there is a change in journalism, too gradual for you to remark it on the spot, or there is a change in me. I cannot bear these phrases ; I long to resent them. My forbears, the tenant farmers of the Mures, would not have suffered such expressions unless it had been from Cauldwell, or Rowallan, or maybe Auchendrane. My Family Pride bristles. I am like the negro, " I just heard last night " who my great, great, great, great grandfather was.—Ever yours, R. L. S.

To J. H. Bates

The next is to a correspondent in Cincinnati, who had been the founder of an R. L. S. Society in that city, "originally," he writes me, under date April 7, 1895, "the outcome of a boyish fancy, but it has now grown into something more substantial."

Vailima, Samoa, March 25th, 1894.

MY DEAR MR. JOE H. BATES,—I shall have the greatest pleasure in acceding to your complimentary request. I shall think it an honour to be associated with your chapter, and I need not remind you (for you have said it yourself) how much depends upon your own exertions whether to make it to me a real honour or only a derision. This is to let you know that I accept the position that you have seriously offered to me in a quite serious spirit. I need scarce tell you that I shall always be pleased to receive reports of your proceedings; and if I do not always acknowledge them, you are to remember that I am a man very much occupied otherwise, and not at all to suppose that I have lost interest in my chapter.

In this world, which (as you justly say) is so full of sorrow and suffering, it will always please me to remember that my name is connected with some efforts after alleviation, nor less so with purposes of innocent recreation which, after all, are the only certain means at our disposal for bettering human life.

With kind regards, to yourself, to Mr. L. C. Congdon, to E. M. G. Bates, and to Mr. Edward Hugh Higlee Bates, and the heartiest wishes for the future success of the chapter, believe me, yours cordially.

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

To William Archer

Vailima, Samoa, March 27th, 1894.

MY DEAR ARCHER,—Many thanks for your *Theatrical World.* Do you know, it strikes me as being really very

good? I have not yet read much of it, but so far as I have looked, there is not a dull and not an empty page in it. Hazlitt, whom you must often have thought of, would have been pleased. Come to think of it, I shall put this book upon the Hazlitt shelf. You have acquired a manner that I can only call august; otherwise, I should have to call it such amazing impudence. The *Bauble Shop* and *Becket* are examples of what I mean. But it "sets you weel."

Marjorie Fleming I have known, as you surmise, for long. She was possibly—no, I take back possibly—she was one of the greatest works of God. Your note about the resemblance of her verses to mine gave me great joy, though it only proved me a plagiarist. By the by, was it not over *The Child's Garden of Verses* that we first scraped acquaintance? I am sorry indeed to hear that my esteemed correspondent Tomarcher has such poor taste in literature.[1] I fear he cannot have inherited this trait from his dear papa. Indeed, I may say I know it, for I remember the energy of papa's disapproval when the work passed through his hands on its way to a second birth, which none regrets more than myself. It is an odd fact, or perhaps a very natural one; I find few greater pleasures than reading my own works, but I never, O I never read *The Black Arrow*. In that country Tomarcher reigns supreme. Well, and after all, if Tomarcher likes it, it has not been written in vain.

We have just now a curious breath from Europe. A young fellow just beginning letters, and no fool, turned up here with a letter of introduction in the well-known blue ink and decorative hieroglyphs of George Meredith. His name may be known to you. It is Sidney Lysaght. He is staying with us but a day or two, and it is strange to me and not unpleasant to hear all the names, old and new, come up again. But oddly the new are so much more in number. If I revisited the glimpses of the moon

[1] As to admire *The Black Arrow*.

on your side of the ocean, I should know comparatively few of them.

My amanuensis deserts me—I should have said you, for yours is the loss, my script having lost all bond with humanity. One touch of nature makes the whole world kin: that nobody can read my hand. It is a humiliating circumstance that thus evens us with printers!

You must sometimes think it strange—or perhaps it is only I that should so think it—to be following the old round, in the gas lamps and the crowded theatres, when I am away here in the tropical forest and the vast silences!

My dear Archer, my wife joins me in the best wishes to yourself and Mrs. Archer, not forgetting Tom; and I am yours very cordially, ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

To SIDNEY COLVIN

Partly concerning a fresh rising, this time of the partisans of Tamasese from the district of Atua, which had occurred and was after some time suppressed; partly in reference to the visit of Mr. Sidney Lysaght; partly in reply to a petition that his letters might be less entirely taken up with native affairs, of relatively little meaning to his correspondent.

[*Vailima, April* 1894.]

MY DEAR COLVIN,—This is the very day the mail goes, and I have as yet written you nothing. But it was just as well—as it was all about my "blacks and chocolates," and what of it had relation to whites you will read some of in the Times. It means, as you will see, that I have at one blow quarrelled with *all* the officials of Samoa, the Foreign Office, and I suppose her Majesty the Queen with milk and honey blest. But you'll see in the Times. I am very well indeed, but just about dead and mighty glad the mail is near here, and I can just give up all hope of contending with my letters, and lie down for the rest of the day. These Times letters are not easy to write.

And I dare say the consuls say, "Why, then, does he write them?"

I had miserable luck with *St. Ives;* being already half-way through it, a book I had ordered six months ago arrives at last, and I have to change the first half of it from top to bottom! How could I have dreamed the French prisoners were watched over like a female charity school, kept in a grotesque livery, and shaved twice a week? And I had made all my points on the idea that they were unshaved and clothed anyhow. However, this last is better business; if only the book had come when I ordered it! *À propos*, many of the books you announce don't come as a matter of fact. When they are of any value, it is best to register them. Your letter, alas! is not here; I sent it down to the cottage, with all my mail, for Fanny; on Sunday night a boy comes up with a lantern and a note from Fanny, to say the woods are full of Atuas and I must bring a horse down that instant, as the posts are established beyond her on the road, and she does not want to have the fight going on between us. Impossible to get a horse; so I started in the dark on foot, with a revolver, and my spurs on my bare feet, leaving directions that the boy should mount after me with the horse. Try such an experience on Our Road once, and do it, if you please, after you have been down town from nine o'clock till six, on board the ship-of-war lunching, teaching Sunday School (I actually do) and making necessary visits; and the Saturday before, having sat all day from ½-past six to ½-past four, scriving at my Times letter. About half-way up, just in fact at "point" of the outposts, I met Fanny coming up. Then all night long I was being wakened with scares that really should be looked into, though I *knew* there was nothing in them and no bottom to the whole story; and the drums and shouts and cries from Tanugamanono and the town keeping up an all-night corybantic chorus in the moonlight—the moon rose

late—and the search-light of the war-ship in the harbour making a jewel of brightness as it lit up the bay of Apia in the distance. And then next morning, about eight o'clock, a drum coming out of the woods and a party of patrols who had been in the woods on our left front (which is our true rear) coming up to the house, and meeting there another party who had been in the woods on our right {front / rear} which is Vaea Mountain, and 43 of them being entertained to ava and biscuits on the verandah, and marching off at last in single file for Apia. Briefly, it is not much wonder if your letter and my whole mail was left at the cottage, and I have no means of seeing or answering particulars.

The whole thing was nothing but a bottomless scare; it was *obviously* so; you couldn't make a child believe it was anything else, but it has made the consuls sit up. My own private scares were really abominably annoying; as for instance after I had got to sleep for the ninth time perhaps—and that was no easy matter either, for I had a crick in my neck so agonising that I had to sleep sitting up—I heard noises as of a man being murdered in the boys' house. To be sure, said I, this is nothing again, but if a man's head was being taken, the noises would be the same! So I had to get up, stifle my cries of agony from the crick, get my revolver, and creep out stealthily to the boys' house. And there were two of them sitting up, keeping watch of their own accord like good boys, and whiling the time over a game of Sweepi (Cascino—the whist of our islanders)—and one of them was our champion idiot, Misifolo, and I suppose he was holding bad cards, and losing all the time—and these noises were his humorous protests against Fortune!

Well, excuse this excursion into my "blacks and chocolates." It is the last. You will have heard from Lysaght how I failed to write last mail. The said Lysaght seems to me a very nice fellow. We were only sorry he

could not stay with us longer. Austin came back from school last week, which made a great time for the Amanuensis, you may be sure. Then on Saturday, the *Curaçoa* came in—same commission, with all our old friends; and on Sunday, as already mentioned, Austin and I went down to service and had lunch afterwards in the wardroom. The officers were awfully nice to Austin; they are the most amiable ship in the world; and after lunch we had a paper handed round on which we were to guess, and sign our guess, of the number of leaves on the pine-apple; I never saw this game before, but it seems it is much practised in the Queen's Navee. When all have betted, one of the party begins to strip the pine-apple head, and the person whose guess is furthest out has to pay for the sherry. My equanimity was disturbed by shouts of *The American Commodore*, and I found that Austin had entered and lost about a bottle of sherry! He turned with great composure and addressed me. "I am afraid I must look to you, Uncle Louis." The Sunday School racket is only an experiment which I took up at the request of the late American Land Commissioner; I am trying it for a month, and if I do as ill as I believe, and the boys find it only half as tedious as I do, I think it will end in a month. I have *carte blanche*, and say what I like; but does any single soul understand me?

Fanny is on the whole very much better. Lloyd has been under the weather, and goes for a month to the South Island of New Zealand for some skating, save the mark! I get all the skating I want among officials.

Dear Colvin, please remember that my life passes among my "blacks or chocolates." If I were to do as you propose, in a bit of a tiff, it would cut you off entirely from my life. You must try to exercise a trifle of imagination, and put yourself, perhaps with an effort, into some sort of sympathy with these people, or how am I to write to you? I think you are truly a little too Cockney with me.—Ever yours, ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

To W. B. Yeats

Vailima, Samoa, April 14, 1894.

DEAR SIR,—Long since when I was a boy I remember the emotions with which I repeated Swinburne's poems and ballads. Some ten years ago, a similar spell was cast upon me by Meredith's *Love in the Valley;* the stanzas beginning " When her mother tends her " haunted me and made me drunk like wine ; and I remember waking with them all the echoes of the hills about Hyères. It may interest you to hear that I have a third time fallen in slavery : this is to your poem called the *Lake Isle of Innisfree.* It is so quaint and airy, simple, artful, and eloquent to the heart—but I seek words in vain. Enough that " always night and day I hear lake water lapping with low sounds on the shore," and am, yours gratefully,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

To George Meredith

The young lady referred to in the following is Mr. Meredith's daughter, now Mrs. H. Sturgis ; the bearer of the introduction, Mr. Sidney Lysaght, author of *The Marplot* and *One of the Grenvilles.* It is only in the first few chapters of Mr. Meredith's *Amazing Marriage* that the character of Gower Woodseer has been allowed to retain any likeness to that of R. L. S.

Vailima, Samoa, April 17*th,* 1894.

MY DEAR MEREDITH,—Many good things have the gods sent to me of late. First of all there was a letter from you by the kind hand of Mariette, if she is not too great a lady to be remembered in such a style ; and then there came one Lysaght with a charming note of introduction in the well-known hand itself. We had but a few days of him, and liked him well. There was a sort of geniality and inward fire about him at which I warmed my hands. It is long since I have seen a young man who has left in me such a favourable impression ; and I find myself telling myself, " O, I must tell this to Lysaght,"

or, "This will interest him," in a manner very unusual after so brief an acquaintance. The whole of my family shared in this favourable impression, and my halls have re-echoed ever since, I am sure he will be amused to know, with *Widdicombe Fair*.

He will have told you doubtless more of my news than I could tell you myself; he has your European perspective, a thing long lost to me. I heard with a great deal of interest the news of Box Hill. And so I understand it is to be enclosed! Allow me to remark, that seems a far more barbaric trait of manners than the most barbarous of ours. We content ourselves with cutting off an occasional head.

I hear we may soon expect *The Amazing Marriage*. You know how long, and with how much curiosity, I have looked forward to the book. Now, in so far as you have adhered to your intention, Gower Woodseer will be a family portrait, age twenty-five, of the highly respectable and slightly influential and fairly aged *Tusitala*. You have not known that gentleman; console yourself, he is not worth knowing. At the same time, my dear Meredith, he is very sincerely yours—for what he is worth, for the memories of old times, and in the expectation of many pleasures still to come. I suppose we shall never see each other again; flitting youths of the Lysaght species may occasionally cover these unconscionable leagues and bear greetings to and fro. But we ourselves must be content to converse on an occasional sheet of notepaper, and I shall never see whether you have grown older, and you shall never deplore that Gower Woodseer should have declined into the pantaloon *Tusitala*. It is perhaps better so. Let us continue to see each other as we were, and accept, my dear Meredith, my love and respect. ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

P.S.—My wife joins me in the kindest messages to yourself and Mariette.

To Charles Baxter

[*Vailima*], *April* 17, '94.

MY DEAR CHARLES,—*St. Ives* is now well on its way into the second volume. There remains no mortal doubt that it will reach the three-volume standard

I am very anxious that you should send me—

1st. *Tom and Jerry*, a cheap edition.

2nd. The book by Ashton—the *Dawn of the Century*, I think it was called—which Colvin sent me, and which has miscarried, and

3rd. If it is possible, a file of the Edinburgh Courant for the years 1811, 1812, 1813, or 1814. I should not care for a whole year. If it were possible to find me three months, winter months by preference, it would do my business not only for *St. Ives*, but for the *Justice-Clerk* as well. Suppose this to be impossible, perhaps I could get the loan of it from somebody; or perhaps it would be possible to have some one read a file for me and make notes. This would be extremely bad, as unhappily one man's food is another man's poison, and the reader would probably leave out everything I should choose. But if you are reduced to that, you might mention to the man who is to read for me that balloon ascensions are in the order of the day.

4th. It might be as well to get a book on balloon ascension, particularly in the early part of the century.

. . . . . .

III. At last this book has come from Scribner, and, alas! I have the first six or seven chapters of *St. Ives* to recast entirely. Who could foresee that they clothed the French prisoners in yellow? But that one fatal fact—and also that they shaved them twice a week—damns the whole beginning. If it had been sent in time, it would have saved me a deal of trouble. . . .

I have had a long letter from Dr. Scott Dalgleish, 25 Mayfield Terrace, asking me to put my name down to the Ballantyne Memorial Committee. I have sent him a pretty sharp answer in favour of cutting down the memorial and giving more to the widow and children. If there is to be any foolery in the way of statues or other trash, please send them a guinea; but if they are going to take my advice and put up a simple tablet with a few heartfelt words, and really devote the bulk of the subscriptions to the wife and family, I will go to the length of twenty pounds, if you will allow me (and if the case of the family be at all urgent), and at least I direct you to send ten pounds. I suppose you had better see Scott Dalgleish himself on the matter. I take the opportunity here to warn you that my head is simply spinning with a multitude of affairs, and I shall probably forget a half of my business at last. R. L. S.

To Mrs. Sitwell

[*Vailima, April* 1894.]

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I have at last got some photographs, and hasten to send you, as you asked, a portrait of Tusitala. He is a strange person; not so lean, say experts, but infinitely battered; mighty active again on the whole; going up and down our break-neck road at all hours of the day and night on horseback; holding meetings with all manner of chiefs; quite a political personage—God save the mark!—in a small way, but at heart very conscious of the inevitable flat failure that awaits every one. I shall never do a better book than *Catriona*, that is my high-water mark, and the trouble of production increases on me at a great rate—and mighty anxious about how I am to leave my family: an elderly man, with elderly preoccupations, whom I should be ashamed to show you for

your old friend; but not a hope of my dying soon and cleanly, and "winning off the stage." Rather I am daily better in physical health. I shall have to see this business out, after all; and I think, in that case, they should have—they might have—spared me all my ill-health this decade past, if it were not to unbar the doors. I have no taste for old age, and my nose is to be rubbed in it in spite of my face. I was meant to die young, and the gods do not love me.

This is very like an epitaph, bar the handwriting, which is anything but monumental, and I dare say I had better stop. Fanny is down at her own cottage planting or deplanting or replanting, I know not which, and she will not be home till dinner, by which time the mail will be all closed, else she would join me in all good messages and remembrances of love. I hope you will congratulate Burne Jones from me on his baronetcy. I cannot make out to be anything but raspingly, harrowingly sad; so I will close, and not affect levity which I cannot feel. Do not altogether forget me; keep a corner of your memory for the exile

LOUIS.

To Charles Baxter

[*Vailima, May* 1894.]

MY DEAR CHARLES,—My dear fellow, I wish to assure you of the greatness of the pleasure that this Edinburgh Edition gives me. I suppose it was your idea to give it that name. No other would have affected me in the same manner. Do you remember, how many years ago—I would be afraid to hazard a guess—one night when I communicated to you certain intimations of early death and aspiration after fame? I was particularly maudlin; and my remorse the next morning on a review of my folly has written the matter very deeply in my mind; from

yours it may easily have fled. If any one at that moment could have shown me the Edinburgh Edition, I suppose I should have died. It is with gratitude and wonder that I consider "the way in which I have been led." Could a more preposterous idea have occurred to us in those days when we used to search our pockets for coppers, too often in vain, and combine forces to produce the threepence necessary for two glasses of beer, or wander down the Lothian Road without any, than that I should be strong and well at the age of forty-three in the island of Upolu, and that you should be at home bringing out the Edinburgh Edition? If it had been possible, I should almost have preferred the Lothian Road Edition, say, with a picture of the old Dutch smuggler on the covers. I have now something heavy on my mind. I had always a great sense of kinship with poor Robert Fergusson—so clever a boy, so wild, of such a mixed strain, so unfortunate, born in the same town with me, and, as I always felt, rather by express intimation than from evidence, so like myself. Now the injustice with which the one Robert is rewarded and the other left out in the cold sits heavy on me, and I wish you could think of some way in which I could do honour to my unfortunate namesake. Do you think it would look like affectation to dedicate the whole edition to his memory? I think it would. The sentiment which would dictate it to me is too abstruse; and besides, I think my wife is the proper person to receive the dedication of my life's work. At the same time, it is very odd—it really looks like the transmigration of souls—I feel that I must do something for Fergusson; Burns has been before me with the gravestone. It occurs to me you might take a walk down the Canongate and see in what condition the stone is. If it be at all uncared for, we might repair it, and perhaps add a few words of inscription.

I must tell you, what I just remembered in a flash as I was walking about dictating this letter—there was in the

original plan of the *Master of Ballantrae* a sort of introduction describing my arrival in Edinburgh on a visit to yourself and your placing in my hands the papers of the story. I actually wrote it, and then condemned the idea —as being a little too like Scott, I suppose. Now I must really find the MS. and try to finish it for the E. E. It will give you, what I should so much like you to have, another corner of your own in that lofty monument.

Suppose we do what I have proposed about Fergusson's monument, I wonder if an inscription like this would look arrogant—

> This stone originally erected
> by Robert Burns has been
> repaired at the
> charges of Robert Louis Stevenson,
> and is by him re-dedicated to
> the memory of Robert Fergusson,
> as the gift of one Edinburgh
> lad to another.

In spacing this inscription I would detach the names of Fergusson and Burns, but leave mine in the text.

Or would that look like sham modesty, and is it better to bring out the three Roberts ?

To Sidney Colvin

Vailima, May 18th, 1894.

my dear colvin,—Your proposals for the Edinburgh Edition are entirely to my mind. About the *Amateur Emigrant,* it shall go to you by this mail well slashed. If you like to slash some more on your own account, I give you permission. 'Tis not a great work ; but since it goes to make up the two first volumes as proposed, I

presume it has not been written in vain.[1]—*Miscellanies.* I see with some alarm the proposal to print *Juvenilia;* does it not seem to you taking myself a little too much as Grandfather William? I am certainly not so young as I once was—a lady took occasion to remind me of the fact no later agone than last night. "Why don't you leave that to the young men, Mr. Stevenson?" said she—but when I remember that I felt indignant at even John Ruskin when he did something of the kind I really feel myself blush from head to heel. If you want to make up the first volume, there are a good many works which I took the trouble to prepare for publication and which have never been republished. In addition to *Roads* and *Dancing Children*, referred to by you, there is *An Autumn Effect* in the Portfolio, and a paper on Fontainebleau—*Forest Notes* is the name of it—in Cornhill. I have no objection to any of these being edited, say with a scythe, and reproduced. But I heartily abominate and reject the idea of reprinting *The Pentland Rising.* For God's sake let me get buried first.

Tales and Fantasies. Vols. I. and II. have my hearty approval. But I think III. and IV. had better be crammed into one as you suggest. I will reprint none of the stories mentioned. They are below the mark. Well, I dare say the beastly *Body-Snatcher* has merit, and I am unjust to it from my recollections of the Pall Mall. But the other two won't do. For vols. V. and VI., now changed into IV. and V., I propose the common title of *South Sea Yarns.* There! These are all my differences of opinion. I agree with every detail of your arrangement, and, as you see, my objections have turned principally on the question of hawking unripe fruit. I dare say it is all pretty green, but that is no reason for us to fill the barrow with trash. Think of having a new set of type cast, paper especially

[1] The suppressed first part of the *Amateur Emigrant*, written in San Francisco in 1879, which it was proposed now to condense and to some extent recast for the Edinburgh Edition.

made, etc., in order to set up rubbish that is not fit for the Saturday Scotsman. It would be the climax of shame.

I am sending you a lot of verses, which had best, I think, be called *Underwoods* Book III., but in what order are they to go? Also, I am going on every day a little, till I get sick of it, with the attempt to get *The Emigrant* compressed into life; I know I can—or you can after me—do it. It is only a question of time and prayer and ink, and should leave something, no, not good, but not all bad—a very genuine appreciation of these folks. You are to remember besides there is that paper of mine on Bunyan in the Magazine of Art. O, and then there's another thing in Seeley called some spewsome name, I cannot recall it.

Well—come, here goes for *Juvenilia. Dancing Infants, Roads, An Autumn Effect, Forest Notes* (but this should come at the end of them, as it's really rather riper), the t'other thing from Seeley, and I'll tell you, you may put in my letter to the Church of Scotland—it's not written amiss, and I dare say *The Philosophy of Umbrellas* might go in, but there I stick—and remember *that* was a collaboration with James Walter Ferrier. O, and there was a little skit called *The Charity Bazaar*, which you might see; I don't think it would do. Now, I do not think there are two other words that should be printed.—By the way, there is an article of mine called *The Day after To-morrow* in the Contemporary which you might find room for somewhere; it's no' bad.

Very busy with all these affairs and some native ones also.

To R. A. M. Stevenson

[*Vailima, June 17th,* 1894.]

MY DEAR BOB,—I must make out a letter this mail or perish in the attempt. All the same, I am deeply stupid,

in bed with a cold, deprived of my amanuensis, and conscious of the wish but not the furnished will. You may be interested to hear how the family inquiries go. It is now quite certain that we are a second-rate lot, and came out of Cunningham or Clydesdale, therefore *British* folk; so that you are Cymry on both sides, and I Cymry and Pict. We may have fought with King Arthur and known Merlin. The first of the family, Stevenson of Stevenson, was quite a great party, and dates back to the wars of Edward First. The last male heir of Stevenson of Stevenson died 1670, £220, 10s. to the bad, from drink. About the same time the Stevensons, who were mostly in Cunningham before, crop up suddenly in the parish of Neilston, over the border in Renfrewshire. Of course, they may have been there before, but there is no word of them in that parish till 1675 in any extracts I have. Our first traceable ancestor was a tenant farmer of Mure of Cauldwell's—James in Nether Carsewell. Presently two families of maltmen are found in Glasgow, both, by re-duplicated proofs, related to James (the son of James) in Nether Carsewell. We descend by his second marriage from Robert; one of these died 1733. It is not very romantic up to now, but has interested me surprisingly to fish out, always hoping for more—and occasionally getting at least a little clearness and confirmation. But the earliest date, 1655, apparently the marriage of James in Nether Carsewell, cannot as yet be pushed back. From which of any number of dozen little families in Cunningham we should derive, God knows! Of course, it doesn't matter a hundred years hence, an argument fatal to all human enterprise, industry, or pleasure. And to me it will be a deadly disappointment if I cannot roll this stone away! One generation further might be nothing, but it is my present object of desire, and we are so near it! There is a man in the same parish called Constantine; if I could only trace to him, I could take you far afield by that one talisman of the strange Christian name of Constantine.

But no such luck! And I kind of fear we shall stick at James.

I. James, a tenant of the Mures, in Nether-Carsewell, Neilston, married (1665 ?) Jean Keir.

II. Robert (Maltman in Glasgow), died 1733, married 1st ; married second, Elizabeth Cumming.

William (Maltman in Glasgow).

Robert, Marion, Elizabeth.

III. Robert (Maltman in Glasgow), married Margaret Fulton (had a large family).

IV. Alan, West India merchant, married Jean Lillie.

V. Robert, married Jean Smith.

VI. Alan.—Margaret Jones.

VII. R. A. M. S.

Note. — Between 1730 – 1766 flourished in Glasgow Alan the Coppersmith, who acts as a kind of a pin to the whole Stevenson system there. He was caution to Robert the Second's will, and to William's will, and to the will of a John, another maltman.

So much, though all inchoate, I trouble you with, knowing that you, at least, must take an interest in it. So much is certain of that strange Celtic descent, that the past has an interest for it apparently gratuitous, but fiercely strong. I wish to trace my ancestors a thousand years, if I trace them by gallowses. It is not love, not pride, not admiration; it is an expansion of the identity, intimately pleasing, and wholly uncritical; I can expend myself in the person of an inglorious ancestor with perfect comfort; or a disgraced, if I could find one. I suppose, perhaps, it is more to me who am childless, and refrain with a certain shock from looking forwards. But, I am sure, in the solid grounds of race, that you have it also in some degree.

Enough genealogy. I do not know if you will be able

to read my hand. Unhappily, Belle, who is my amanuensis, is out of the way on other affairs, and I have to make the unwelcome effort. (O this is beautiful, I am quite pleased with myself.) Graham has just arrived last night (my mother is coming by the other steamer in three days), and has told me of your meeting, and he said you looked a little older than I did; so that I suppose we keep step fairly on the downward side of the hill. He thought you looked harassed, and I could imagine that too. I sometimes feel harassed. I have a great family here about me, a great anxiety. The loss (to use my grandfather's expression), the "loss" of our family is that we are disbelievers in the morrow—perhaps I should say, rather, in next year. The future is *always* black to us; it was to Robert Stevenson; to Thomas; I suspect to Alan; to R. A. M. S. it was so almost to his ruin in youth; to R. L. S., who had a hard hopeful strain in him from his mother, it was not so much so once, but becomes daily more so. Daily so much more so, that I have a painful difficulty in believing I can ever finish another book, or that the public will ever read it.

I have so huge a desire to know exactly what you are doing, that I suppose I should tell you what I am doing by way of an example. I have a room now, a part of the twelve-foot verandah sparred in, at the most inaccessible end of the house. Daily I see the sunrise out of my bed, which I still value as a tonic, a perpetual tuning fork, a look of God's face once in the day. At six my breakfast comes up to me here, and I work till eleven. If I am quite well, I sometimes go out and bathe in the river before lunch, twelve. In the afternoon I generally work again, now alone drafting, now with Belle dictating. Dinner is at six, and I am often in bed by eight. This is supposing me to stay at home. But I must often be away, sometimes all day long, sometimes till twelve, one, or two at night, when you might see me coming home to the sleeping house, sometimes in a trackless darkness, some-

times with a glorious tropic moon, everything drenched with dew—unsaddling and creeping to bed; and you would no longer be surprised that I live out in this country, and not in Bournemouth—in bed.

My great recent interruptions have (as you know) come from politics; not much in my line, you will say. But it is impossible to live here and not feel very sorely the consequences of the horrid white mismanagement. I tried standing by and looking on, and it became too much for me. They are such illogical fools; a logical fool in an office, with a lot of red tape, is conceivable. Furthermore, he is as much as we have any reason to expect of officials—a thoroughly common-place, unintellectual lot. But these people are wholly on wires; laying their ears down, skimming away, pausing as though shot, and presto! full spread on the other tack. I observe in the official class mostly an insane jealousy of the smallest kind, as compared to which the artist's is of a grave, modest character —the actor's, even; a desire to extend his little authority, and to relish it like a glass of wine, that is *impayable*. Sometimes, when I see one of these little kings strutting over one of his victories—wholly illegal, perhaps, and certain to be reversed to his shame if his superiors ever heard of it—I could weep. The strange thing is that they *have nothing else*. I auscultate them in vain; no real sense of duty, no real comprehension, no real attempt to comprehend, no wish for information—you cannot offend one of them more bitterly than by offering information, though it is certain that you have *more*, and obvious that you have *other*, information than they have; and talking of policy, they could not play a better stroke than by listening to you, and it need by no means influence their action. *Tenez*, you know what a French post office or railway official is? That is the diplomatic card to the life. Dickens is not in it; caricature fails.

All this keeps me from my work, and gives me the unpleasant side of the world. When your letters are dis-

believed it makes you angry, and that is rot; and I wish I could keep out of it with all my soul. But I have just got into it again, and farewell peace!

My work goes along but slowly. I have got to a crossing place, I suppose; the present book, *St. Ives*, is nothing; it is in no style in particular, a tissue of adventures, the central character not very well done, no philosophic pith under the yarn; and, in short, if people will read it, that's all I ask; and if they won't, damn them! I like doing it though; and if you ask me why! After that I am on *Weir of Hermiston* and *Heathercat*, two Scotch stories, which will either be something different, or I shall have failed. The first is generally designed, and is a private story of two or three characters in a very grim vein. The second—alas! the thought—is an attempt at a real historical novel, to present a whole field of time; the race—our own race—the west land and Clydesdale blue bonnets, under the influence of their last trial, when they got to a pitch of organisation in madness that no other peasantry has ever made an offer at. I was going to call it *The Killing Time*, but this man Crockett has forestalled me in that. Well, it'll be a big smash if I fail in it; but a gallant attempt. All my weary reading as a boy, which you remember well enough, will come to bear on it; and if my mind will keep up to the point it was in a while back, perhaps I can pull it through.

For two months past, Fanny, Belle, Austin (her child), and I have been alone; but yesterday, as I mentioned, Graham Balfour arrived, and on Wednesday my mother and Lloyd will make up the party to its full strength. I wish you could drop in for a month or a week, or two hours. That is my chief want. On the whole, it is an unexpectedly pleasant corner I have dropped into for an end of it, which I could scarcely have foreseen from Wilson's shop, or the Princes Street Gardens, or the Portobello Road. Still, I would like to hear what my *alter ego* thought of it; and I would sometimes like to have my old

maître-ès-arts express an opinion on what I do. I put this very tamely, being on the whole a quiet elderly man; but it is a strong passion with me, though intermittent. Now, try to follow my example and tell me something about yourself, Louisa, the Bab, and your work; and kindly send me some specimens of what you're about. I have only seen one thing by you, about Notre Dame in the Westminster or St. James's, since I left England, now I suppose six years ago.

I have looked this trash over, and it is not at all the letter I wanted to write—not truck about officials, ancestors, and the like rancidness—but you have to let your pen go in its own broken-down gait, like an old butcher's pony, stop when it pleases, and go on again as it will.—Ever, my dear Bob, your affectionate cousin,

R. L. Stevenson.

To Sidney Colvin

Vailima, June 18th, '94.

my dear colvin,—You are to please understand that my last letter is withdrawn unconditionally. You and Baxter are having all the trouble of this Edition, and I simply put myself in your hands for you to do what you like with me, and I am sure that will be the best, at any rate. Hence you are to conceive me withdrawing all objections to your printing anything you please. After all, it is a sort of family affair. About the Miscellany Section, both plans seem to me quite good. Toss up. I think the *Old Gardener* has to stay where I put him last. It would not do to separate John and Robert.

In short, I am only sorry I ever uttered a word about the edition, and leave you to be the judge. I have had a vile cold which has prostrated me for more than a fortnight, and even now tears me nightly with spasmodic coughs; but it has been a great victory. I have never

borne a cold with so little hurt; wait till the clouds blow by, before you begin to boast! I have had no fever; and though I've been very unhappy, it is nigh over, I think. Of course, *St. Ives* has paid the penalty. I must not let you be disappointed in *St. I.* It is a mere tissue of adventures; the central figure not very well or very sharply drawn; no philosophy, no destiny, to it; some of the happenings very good in themselves, I believe, but none of them *bildende*, none of them constructive, except in so far perhaps as they make up a kind of sham picture of the time, all in italics and all out of drawing. Here and there, I think, it is well written; and here and there it's not. Some of the episodic characters are amusing, I do believe; others not, I suppose. However, they are the best of the thing such as it is. If it has a merit to it, I should say it was a sort of deliberation and swing to the style, which seems to me to suit the mail-coaches and post-chaises with which it sounds all through. 'Tis my most prosaic book.

I called on the two German ships now in port, and we are quite friendly with them, and intensely friendly of course with our own *Curaçoas*. But it is other guess work on the beach. Some one has employed, or subsidised, one of the local editors to attack me once a week. He is pretty scurrilous and pretty false. The first effect of the perusal of the weekly Beast is to make me angry; the second is a kind of deep, golden content and glory, when I seem to say to people: "See! this is my position —I am a plain man dwelling in the bush in a house, and behold they have to get up this kind of truck against me —and I have so much influence that they are obliged to write a weekly article to say I have none."

By this time you must have seen Lysaght and forgiven me the letter that came not at all. He was really so nice a fellow—he had so much to tell me of Meredith—and the time was so short—that I gave up the intervening days between mails entirely to entertain him

We go on pretty nicely. Fanny, Belle, and I have had two months alone, and it has been very pleasant. But by to-morrow or next day noon, we shall see the whole clan assembled again about Vailima table, which will be pleasant too ; seven persons in all, and the Babel of voices will be heard again in the big hall so long empty and silent. Good-bye. Love to all. Time to close.—Yours ever, R. L. S.

To Henry James

Vailima, July 7th, 1894.

DEAR HENRY JAMES,—I am going to try and dictate to you a letter or a note, and begin the same without any spark of hope, my mind being entirely in abeyance. This malady is very bitter on the literary man. I have had it now coming on for a month, and it seems to get worse instead of better. If it should prove to be softening of the brain, a melancholy interest will attach to the present document. I heard a great deal about you from my mother and Graham Balfour ; the latter declares that you could take a First in any Samoan subject. If that be so, I should like to hear you on the theory of the constitution. Also to consult you on the force of the particles *o lo'o* and *ua*, which are the subject of a dispute among local pundits. You might, if you ever answer this, give me your opinion on the origin of the Samoan race, just to complete the favour.

They both say that you are looking well, and I suppose I may conclude from that that you are feeling passably. I wish I was. Do not suppose from this that I am ill in body ; it is the numskull that I complain of. And when that is wrong, as you must be very keenly aware, you begin every day with a smarting disappointment, which is not good for the temper. I am in one of the humours when a man wonders how any one can be such an ass as to embrace the profession of letters, and not get appren-

ticed to a barber or keep a baked-potato stall. But I have no doubt in the course of a week, or perhaps to-morrow, things will look better.

We have at present in port the model warship of Great Britain. She is called the *Curaçoa*, and has the nicest set of officers and men conceivable. They, the officers, are all very intimate with us, and the front verandah is known as the Curaçoa Club, and the road up to Vailima is known as the Curaçoa Track. It was rather a surprise to me; many naval officers have I known, and somehow had not learned to think entirely well of them, and perhaps sometimes ask myself a little uneasily how that kind of men could do great actions? and behold! the answer comes to me, and I see a ship that I would guarantee to go anywhere it was possible for men to go, and accomplish anything it was permitted man to attempt. I had a cruise on board of her not long ago to Manu'a, and was delighted. The goodwill of all on board; the grim playfulness of [1] quarters, with the wounded falling down at the word; the ambulances hastening up and carrying them away; the Captain suddenly crying, "Fire in the ward-room!" and the squad hastening forward with the hose; and, last and most curious spectacle of all, all the men in their dust-coloured fatigue clothes, at a note of the bugle, falling simultaneously flat on deck, and the ship proceeding with its prostrate crew—*quasi* to ram an enemy; our dinner at night in a wild open anchorage, the ship rolling almost to her gunwales, and showing us alternately her bulwarks up in the sky, and then the wild broken cliffy palm-crested shores of the island with the surf thundering and leaping close aboard. We had the ward-room mess on deck, lit by pink wax tapers, everybody, of course, in uniform but myself, and the first lieutenant (who is a rheumaticky body) wrapped in a boat cloak. Gradually the sunset faded out, the island disappeared from the eye, though it remained menacingly

[1] Word omitted in MS.

present to the ear with the voice of the surf; and then the captain turned on the searchlight and gave us the coast, the beach, the trees, the native houses, and the cliffs by glimpses of daylight, a kind of deliberate lightning. About which time, I suppose, we must have come as far as the dessert, and were probably drinking our first glass of port to Her Majesty. We stayed two days at the island, and had, in addition, a very picturesque snapshot at the native life. The three islands of Manu'a are independent, and are ruled over by a little slip of a half-caste girl about twenty, who sits all day in a pink gown, in a little white European house with about a quarter of an acre of roses in front of it, looking at the palm-trees on the village street, and listening to the surf. This, so far as I could discover, was all she had to do. "This is a very dull place," she said. It appears she could go to no other village for fear of raising the jealousy of her own people in the capital. And as for going about "tafatafaoing," as we say here, its cost was too enormous. A strong able-bodied native must walk in front of her and blow the conch shell continuously from the moment she leaves one house until the moment she enters another. Did you ever blow the conch shell? I presume not; but the sweat literally hailed off that man, and I expected every moment to see him burst a blood-vessel. We were entertained to kava in the guest-house with some very original features. The young men who run for the *kava* have a right to misconduct themselves *ad libitum* on the way back; and though they were told to restrain themselves on the occasion of our visit, there was a strange hurly-burly at their return, when they came beating the trees and the posts of the houses, leaping, shouting, and yelling like Bacchants.

I tasted on that occasion what it is to be great. My name was called next after the captain's, and several chiefs (a thing quite new to me, and not at all Samoan practice) drank to me by name.

And now, if you are not sick of the *Curaçoa* and Manu'a, I am, at least on paper. And I decline any longer to give you examples of how not to write.

By the by, you sent me long ago a work by Anatole France, which I confess I did not *taste*. Since then I have made the acquaintance of the *Abbé Coignard*, and have become a faithful adorer. I don't think a better book was ever written.

And I have no idea what I have said, and I have no idea what I ought to have said, and I am a total ass, but my heart is in the right place, and I am, my dear Henry James, yours, R. L. S.

To Marcel Schwob

Vailima, Upolu, Samoa, July 7, 1894.

DEAR MR. MARCEL SCHWOB,—Thank you for having remembered me in my exile. I have read *Mimes* twice as a whole; and now, as I write, I am reading it again as it were by accident, and a piece at a time, my eye catching a word and travelling obediently on through the whole number. It is a graceful book, essentially graceful, with its haunting agreeable melancholy, its pleasing savoury of antiquity. At the same time, by its merits, it shows itself rather as the promise of something else to come than a thing final in itself. You have yet to give us—and I am expecting it with impatience—something of a larger gait; something daylit, not twilit; something with the colours of life, not the flat tints of a temple illumination; something that shall be *said* with all the clearnesses and the trivialities of speech, not *sung* like a semi-articulate lullaby. It will not please yourself as well, when you come to give it us, but it will please others better. It will be more of a whole, more worldly, more nourished, more commonplace—and not so pretty, perhaps not even so beautiful. No man knows better than I that, as we go on in life, we

must part from prettiness and the graces. We but attain qualities to lose them ; life is a series of farewells, even in art ; even our proficiencies are deciduous and evanescent. So here with these exquisite pieces the xviith, xviiith, and ivth of the present collection. You will perhaps never excel them ; I should think the " Hermes," never. Well, you will do something else, and of that I am in expectation. —Yours cordially, ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

To A. St. Gaudens

Vailima, Samoa, July 8, 1894.

MY DEAR ST. GAUDENS,—This is to tell you that the medallion has been at last triumphantly transported up the hill and placed over my smoking-room mantelpiece. It is considered by everybody a first-rate but flattering portrait. We have it in a very good light, which brings out the artistic merits of the god-like sculptor to great advantage. As for my own opinion, I believe it to be a speaking likeness, and not flattered at all ; possibly a little the reverse. The verses (curse the rhyme) look remarkably well.

Please do not longer delay, but send me an account for the expense of the gilt letters. I was sorry indeed that they proved beyond the means of a small farmer.— Yours very sincerely, ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

To Miss Adelaide Boodle

Vailima, July 14, 1894.

MY DEAR ADELAIDE,—. . . So, at last, you are going into mission work ? where I think your heart always was. You will like it in a way, but remember it is dreary long. Do you know the story of the American tramp who was offered meals and a day's wage to chop with the back of

an axe on a fallen trunk. "Damned if I can go on chopping when I can't see the chips fly!" You will never see the chips fly in mission work, never; and be sure you know it beforehand. The work is one long dull disappointment, varied by acute revulsions; and those who are by nature courageous and cheerful, and have grown old in experience, learn to rub their hands over infinitesimal successes. However, as I really believe there is some good done in the long run—*gutta cavat lapidem non vi* in this business—it is a useful and honourable career in which no one should be ashamed to embark. Always remember the fable of the sun, the storm, and the traveller's cloak. Forget wholly and for ever all small pruderies, and remember that *you cannot change ancestral feelings of right and wrong without what is practically soul-murder.* Barbarous as the customs may seem, always hear them with patience, always judge them with gentleness, always find in them some seed of good; see that you always develop them; remember that all you can do is to civilise the man in the line of his own civilisation, such as it is. And never expect, never believe in, thaumaturgic conversions. They may do very well for St. Paul; in the case of an Andaman islander they mean less than nothing. In fact, what you have to do is to teach the parents in the interests of their great-grandchildren.

Now, my dear Adelaide, dismiss from your mind the least idea of fault upon your side; nothing is further from the fact. I cannot forgive you, for I do not know your fault. My own is plain enough, and the name of it is cold-hearted neglect; and you may busy yourself more usefully in trying to forgive me. But ugly as my fault is, you must not suppose it to mean more than it does; it does not mean that we have at all forgotten you, that we have become at all indifferent to the thought of you. See, in my life of Jenkin, a remark of his, very well expressed, on the friendships of men who do not write to each other. I can honestly say that I have not changed

to you in any way; though I have behaved thus ill, thus cruelly. Evil is done by want of—well, principally by want of industry. You can imagine what I would say (in a novel) of any one who had behaved as I have done. *Deteriora sequor.* And you must somehow manage to forgive your old friend; and if you will be so very good, continue to give us news of you, and let us share the knowledge of your adventures, sure that it will be always followed with interest—even if it is answered with the silence of ingratitude. For I am not a fool; I know my faults, I know they are ineluctable, I know they are growing on me. I know I may offend again, and I warn you of it. But the next time I offend, tell me so plainly and frankly like a lady, and don't lacerate my heart and bludgeon my vanity with imaginary faults of your own and purely gratuitous penance. I might suspect you of irony!

We are all fairly well, though I have been off work and off—as you know very well—letter-writing. Yet I have sometimes more than twenty letters, and sometimes more than thirty, going out each mail. And Fanny has had a most distressing bronchitis for some time, which she is only now beginning to get over. I have just been to see her; she is lying—though she had breakfast an hour ago, about seven—in her big cool, mosquito-proof room, ingloriously asleep. As for me, you see that a doom has come upon me: I cannot make marks with a pen—witness "ingloriously" above; and my amanuensis not appearing so early in the day, for she is then immersed in household affairs, and I can hear her "steering the boys" up and down the verandahs—you must decipher this unhappy letter for yourself and, I fully admit, with everything against you. A letter should be always well written; how much more a letter of apology! Legibility is the politeness of men of letters, as punctuality of kings and beggars. By the punctuality of my replies, and the beauty of my hand-writing, judge what a fine conscience I must have!

Now, my dear gamekeeper, I must really draw to a close. For I have much else to write before the mail goes out three days hence. Fanny being asleep, it would not be conscientious to invent a message from her, so you must just imagine her sentiments. I find I have not the heart to speak of your recent loss. You remember perhaps, when my father died, you told me those ugly images of sickness, decline, and impaired reason, which then haunted me day and night, would pass away and be succeeded by things more happily characteristic. I have found it so. He now haunts me, strangely enough, in two guises; as a man of fifty, lying on a hillside and carving mottoes on a stick, strong and well; and as a younger man, running down the sands into the sea near North Berwick, myself —*ætat.* 11—somewhat horrified at finding him so beautiful when stripped! I hand on your own advice to you in case you have forgotten it, as I know one is apt to do in seasons of bereavement.—Ever yours, with much love and sympathy, ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

To Mrs. A. Baker

This refers again to the printing of some of his books in Braille type for the blind.

Vailima, Samoa, July 16, 1894.

DEAR MRS. BAKER,—I am very much obliged to you for your letter and the enclosure from Mr. Skinner. Mr. Skinner says he "thinks Mr. Stevenson must be a very kind man"; he little knows me. But I am very sure of one thing, that you are a very kind woman. I envy you —my amanuensis being called away, I continue in my own hand, or what is left of it—unusually legible, I am thankful to see—I envy you your beautiful choice of an employment. There must be no regrets at least for a day so spent; and when the night falls you need ask no blessing on your work. "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of these."—Yours truly, ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

To Sidney Colvin

July, 1894.

my dear colvin,—I have to thank you this time for a very good letter, and will announce for the future, though I cannot now begin to put in practice, good intentions for our correspondence. I will try to return to the old system and write from time to time during the month; but truly you did not much encourage me to continue! However, that is all by-past. I do not know that there is much in your letter that calls for answer. Your questions about *St. Ives* were practically answered in my last; so were your wails about the edition, *Amateur Emigrant*, etc. By the end of the year *St. I.* will be practically finished, whatever it be worth, and that I know not. When shall I receive proofs of the Magnum Opus? or shall I receive them at all?

The return of the Amanuensis feebly lightens my heart. You can see the heavy weather I was making of it with my unaided pen. The last month has been particularly cheery largely owing to the presence of our good friends the Curaçoas. She is really a model ship, charming officers and charming seamen. They gave a ball last month, which was very rackety and joyous and naval. . . .

On the following day, about one o'clock, three horsemen might have been observed approaching Vailima, who gradually resolved themselves into two petty officers and a native guide. Drawing himself up and saluting, the spokesman (a corporal of Marines) addressed me thus. "Me and my shipmates inwites Mr. and Mrs. Stevens, Mrs. Strong, Mr. Austin, and Mr. Balfour to a ball to be given to-night in the self-same 'all." It was of course impossible to refuse, though I contented myself with putting in a very brief appearance. One glance was sufficient; the ball went off like a rocket from the start. I had only time to watch Belle carecring around with a gallant bluejacket of exactly her own height—the standard

of the British navy—an excellent dancer and conspicuously full of small-talk—and to hear a remark from a beach-comber, " It's a nice sight this some way, to see the officers dancing like this with the men, but I tell you, sir, these are the men that'll fight together ! "

I tell you, Colvin, the acquaintance of the men—and boys—makes me feel patriotic. Eeles in particular is a man whom I respect. I am half in a mind to give him a letter of introduction to you when he goes home. In case you feel inclined to make a little of him, give him a dinner, ask Henry James to come to meet him, etc.—you might let me know. I don't know that he would show his best, but he is a remarkably fine fellow, in every department of life.

We have other visitors in port. A Count Festetics de Tolna, an Austrian officer, a very pleasant, simple, boyish creature, with his young wife, daughter of an American millionaire ; he is a friend of our own Captain Wurmbrand, and it is a great pity Wurmbrand is away.

Glad you saw and liked Lysaght. He has left in our house a most cheerful and pleasing memory, as a good, pleasant, brisk fellow with good health and brains, and who enjoys himself and makes other people happy. I am glad he gave you a good report of our surroundings and way of life ; but I knew he would, for I believe he had a glorious time—and gave one.[1]

[1] I may be allowed to quote the following sentence from a letter of this gentleman written when the news of our friend's death reached England :—" So great was his power of winning love that though I knew him for less than a week I could have borne the loss of many a more intimate friend with less sorrow than Stevenson's. When I saw him, last Easter, there was no suggestion of failure of strength. After all I had heard of his delicacy I was astonished at his vigour. He was up at five, and at work soon after, and at eleven o'clock at night he was dancing on the floor of the big room while I played Scotch and Irish reels on the rickety piano. He would talk to me for hours of home and old friends, but with a wonderful cheerfulness, knowing himself banished from them for life and yet brought close to them by love. I confidently counted on his living ; he took keen interest in my own poor work, and it was one of my ambitions to send him a book some day which would better deserve his attention."

I am on fair terms with the two Treaty officials, though all such intimacies are precarious; with the consuls, I need not say, my position is deplorable. The President (Herr Emil Schmidt) is a rather dreamy man, whom I like. Lloyd, Graham and I go to breakfast with him to-morrow; the next day the whole party of us lunch on the *Curaçoa* and go in the evening to a *Bierabend* at Dr. Funk's. We are getting up a paper-chase for the following week with some of the young German clerks, and have in view a sort of child's party for grown-up persons with kissing games, etc., here at Vailima. Such is the gay scene in which we move. Now I have done something, though not as much as I wanted, to give you an idea of how we are getting on, and I am keenly conscious that there are other letters to do before the mail goes.—Yours ever,

R. L. Stevenson.

To J. M. Barrie

Vailima, July 13, 1894.

my dear barrie,—This is the last effort of an ulcerated conscience. I have been so long owing you a letter, I have heard so much of you, fresh from the press, from my mother and Graham Balfour, that I have to write a letter no later than to-day, or perish in my shame. But the deuce of it is, my dear fellow, that you write such a very good letter that I am ashamed to exhibit myself before my junior (which you are, after all) in the light of the dreary idiot I feel. Understand that there will be nothing funny in the following pages. If I can manage to be rationally coherent, I shall be more than satisfied.

In the first place, I have had the extreme satisfaction to be shown that photograph of your mother. It bears evident traces of the hand of an amateur. How is it that amateurs invariably take better photographs than professionals? I must qualify invariably. My own nega-

tives have always represented a province of chaos and old night in which you might dimly perceive fleecy spots of twilight, representing nothing; so that, if I am right in supposing the portrait of your mother to be yours, I must salute you as my superior. Is that your mother's breakfast? Or is it only afternoon tea? If the first, do let me recommend to Mrs. Barrie to add an egg to her ordinary. Which, if you please, I will ask her to eat to the honour of her son, and I am sure she will live much longer for it, to enjoy his fresh successes. I never in my life saw anything more deliciously characteristic. I declare I can hear her speak. I wonder my mother could resist the temptation of your proposed visit to Kirriemuir, which it was like your kindness to propose. By the way, I was twice in Kirriemuir, I believe in the year '71, when I was going on a visit to Glenogil. It was Kirriemuir, was it not? I have a distinct recollection of an inn at the end —I think the upper end—of an irregular open place or square, in which I always see your characters evolve. But, indeed, I did not pay much attention; being all bent upon my visit to a shooting-box, where I should fish a real trout-stream, and I believe preserved. I did, too, and it was a charming stream, clear as crystal, without a trace of peat—a strange thing in Scotland—and alive with trout; the name of it I cannot remember, it was something like the Queen's River, and in some hazy way connected with memories of Mary Queen of Scots. It formed an epoch in my life, being the end of all my trout-fishing. I had always been accustomed to pause and very laboriously to kill every fish as I took it. But in the Queen's River I took so good a basket that I forgot these niceties; and when I sat down, in a hard rain shower, under a bank, to take my sandwiches and sherry, lo! and behold, there was the basketful of trouts still kicking in their agony.

I had a very unpleasant conversation with my conscience. All that afternoon I persevered in fishing, brought

home my basket in triumph, and sometime that night, "in the wee sma' hours ayont the twal," I finally forswore the gentle craft of fishing. I dare say your local knowledge may identify this historic river; I wish it could go farther and identify also that particular Free kirk in which I sat and groaned on Sunday. While my hand is in I must tell you a story. At that antique epoch you must not fall into the vulgar error that I was myself ancient. I was, on the contrary, very young, very green, and (what you will appreciate, Mr. Barrie) very shy. There came one day to lunch at the house two very formidable old ladies—or one very formidable, and the other what you please—answering to the honoured and historic name of the Miss C—— A——'s of Balnamoon. At table I was exceedingly funny, and entertained the company with tales of geese and bubbly-jocks. I was great in the expression of my terror for these bipeds, and suddenly this horrid, severe, and eminently matronly old lady put up a pair of gold eye-glasses, looked at me awhile in silence, and pronounced in a clangorous voice her verdict. "You give me very much the effect of a coward, Mr. Stevenson!" I had very nearly left two vices behind me at Glenogil —fishing and jesting at table. And of one thing you may be very sure, my lips were no more opened at that meal.

July 29th.—No, Barrie, 'tis in vain they try to alarm me with their bulletins. No doubt, you're ill, and unco ill, I believe; but I have been so often in the same case that I know pleurisy and pneumonia are in vain against Scotsmen who can write. (I once could.) You cannot imagine probably how near me this common calamity brings you. *Ce que j'ai toussé dans ma vie!* How often and how long have I been on the rack at night and learned to appreciate that noble passage in the Psalms when somebody or other is said to be more set on something than they "who dig for hid treasures—yea, than those who long for the morning"—for all the world, as you have

been racked and you have longed. Keep your heart up, and you'll do. Tell that to your mother, if you are still in any danger or suffering. And by the way, if you are at all like me—and I tell myself you are very like me—be sure there is only one thing good for you, and that is the sea in hot climates. Mount, sir, into " a little frigot " of 5000 tons or so, and steer peremptorily for the tropics ; and what if the ancient mariner, who guides your frigot, should startle the silence of the ocean with the cry of land ho !—say, when the day is dawning—and you should see the turquoise mountain tops of Upolu coming hand over fist above the horizon ? Mr. Barrie, sir, 'tis then there would be larks ! And though I cannot be certain that our climate would suit you (for it does not suit some), I am sure as death the voyage would do you good—would do you *Best*—and if Samoa didn't do, you needn't stay beyond the month, and I should have had another pleasure in my life, which is a serious consideration for me. I take this as the hand of the Lord preparing your way to Vailima—in the desert, certainly—in the desert of Cough and by the ghoul-haunted woodland of Fever—but whither that way points there can be no question —and there will be a meeting of the twa Hoasting Scots Makers in spite of fate, fortune and the Devil. *Absit omen !*

My dear Barrie, I am a little in the dark about this new work of yours :[1] what is to become of me afterwards ? You say carefully—methought anxiously—that I was no longer me when I grew up ? I cannot bear this suspense : what is it ? It's no forgery ? And AM I HANGIT ? These are the elements of a very pretty lawsuit which you had better come to Samoa to compromise. I am enjoying a great pleasure that I had long looked forward to, reading Orme's *History of Indostan ;* I had been looking out for it everywhere ; but at last, in four volumes, large quarto,

[1] *Sentimental Tommy :* whose chief likeness to R. L. S. was meant to be in the literary temperament and passion for the *mot propre.*

beautiful type and page, and with a delectable set of maps and plans, and all the names of the places wrongly spelled —it came to Samoa, little Barrie. I tell you frankly, you had better come soon. I am sair failed a'ready; and what I may be if you continue to dally, I dread to conceive. I may be speechless; already, or at least for a month or so, I'm little better than a tee-toller—I beg pardon, a teetotaller. It is not exactly physical, for I am in good health, working four or five hours a day in my plantation, and intending to ride a paper-chase next Sunday—ay, man, that's a fact, and I havena had the hert to breathe it to my mother yet —the obligation's poleetical, for I am trying every means to live well with my German neighbours—and, O Barrie, but it's no easy! . . . To be sure, there are many exceptions. And the whole of the above must be regarded as private—strictly private. Breathe it not in Kirriemuir: tell it not to the daughters of Dundee! What a nice extract this would make for the daily papers! and how it would facilitate my position here!

August 5th.—This is Sunday, the Lord's Day. "The hour of attack approaches." And it is a singular consideration what I risk; I may yet be the subject of a tract, and a good tract too—such as one which I remember reading with recreant awe and rising hair in my youth, of a boy who was a very good boy, and went to Sunday Schule, and one day kipped from it, and went and actually bathed, and was dashed over a waterfall, and he was the only son of his mother, and she was a widow. A dangerous trade, that, and one that I have to practise. I'll put in a word when I get home again, to tell you whether I'm killed or not. "Accident in the (Paper) Hunting Field: death of a notorious author. We deeply regret to announce the death of the most unpopular man in Samoa, who broke his neck at the descent of Magiagi, from the misconduct of his little raving lunatic of an old beast of a pony. It is

proposed to commemorate the incident by the erection of a suitable pile. The design (by our local architect, Mr. Walker) is highly artificial, with a rich and voluminous Crockett at each corner, a small but impervious Barrièer at the entrance, an arch at the top, an Archer of a pleasing but solid character at the bottom; the colour will be genuine William-Black; and Lang, lang may the ladies sit wi' their fans in their hands." Well, well, they may sit as they sat for me, and little they'll reck, the ungrateful jauds! Muckle they cared about Tusitala when they had him! But now ye can see the difference; now leddies, ye can repent, when ower late, o' your former cauldness and what ye'll perhaps allow me to ca' your *tepeedity!* He was beautiful as the day, but his day is done! And perhaps, as he was maybe gettin' a wee thing fly-blown, it's nane too shüne.

Monday, August 6th.—Well, sir, I have escaped the dangerous conjunction of the widow's only son and the Sabbath Day. We had a most enjoyable time, and Lloyd and I were 3 and 4 to arrive; I will not tell here what interval had elapsed between our arrival and the arrival of 1 and 2; the question, sir, is otiose and malign; it deserves, it shall have no answer. And now without further delay to the main purpose of this hasty note. We received and we have already in fact distributed the gorgeous fahbrics of Kirriemuir. Whether from the splendour of the robes themselves, or from the direct nature of the compliments with which you had directed us to accompany the presentations, one young lady blushed as she received the proofs of your munificence. . . . Bad ink, and the dregs of it at that, but the heart in the right place. Still very cordially interested in my Barrie and wishing him well through his sickness, which is of the body, and long defended from mine, which is of the head, and by the impolite might be described as idiocy. The whole head is useless, and the whole sitting part painful: reason, the recent Paper Chase.

There was racing and chasing in Vailele plantation,
And vastly we enjoyed it,
But, alas! for the state of my foundation,
For it wholly has destroyed it.

Come, my mind is looking up. The above is wholly impromptu.—On oath, TUSITALA.

To Sidney Colvin

The missionary view of the Sunday paper-chase, with an account of Stevenson's apologies to the ladies and gentlemen of the mission, have been printed by Mr. W. E. Clarke in the Chronicle of the London Missionary Society for April and May 1908.

[*Vailima*] *Aug. 7th*, 1894.

MY DEAR COLVIN,—This is to inform you, sir, that on Sunday last (and this is Tuesday) I attained my ideal here, and we had a paper-chase in Vailele Plantation, about 15 miles, I take it, from us; and it was all that could be wished. It is really better fun than following the hounds, since you have to be your own hound, and a precious bad hound I was, following every false scent on the whole course to the bitter end; but I came in 3rd at the last on my little Jack, who stuck to it gallantly, and awoke the praises of some discriminating persons. ($5 + 7 + 2\frac{1}{2} = 14\frac{1}{2}$ miles; yes, that is the count.) We had quite the old sensations of exhilaration, discovery, an appeal to a savage instinct; and I felt myself about 17 again, a pleasant experience. However, it was on the Sabbath Day, and I am now a pariah among the English, as if I needed any increment of unpopularity. I must not go again; it gives so much unnecessary tribulation to poor people, and, sure, we don't want to make tribulation. I have been forbidden to work, and have been instead doing my two or three hours in the plantation every morning. I only wish somebody would pay me £10 a day for taking care of cacao, and I could leave literature to others. Certainly, if I have plenty of exercise, and no work, I feel

much better ; but there is Biles the butcher ! him we have always with us.

I do not much like novels, I begin to think, but I am enjoying exceedingly Orme's *History of Hindostan*, a lovely book in its way, in large quarto, with a quantity of maps, and written in a very lively and solid eighteenth century way, never picturesque except by accident and from a kind of conviction, and a fine sense of order. No historian I have ever read is so minute ; yet he never gives you a word about the people ; his interest is entirely limited in the concatenation of events, into which he goes with a lucid, almost superhuman, and wholly ghostly gusto. "By the ghost of a mathematician" the book might be announced. A very brave, honest book.

Your letter to hand.

Fact is, I don't like the picter.[1] O, it's a good picture, but if you *ask* me, you know, I believe, stoutly believe, that mankind, including you, are going mad. I am not in the midst with the other frenzy dancers, so I don't catch it wholly ; and when you show me a thing—and ask me, don't you know—Well, well ! Glad to get so good an account of the *Amateur Emigrant*. Talking of which, I am strong for making a volume out of selections from the South Sea letters ; I read over again the King of Apemama, and it is good in spite of your teeth, and a real curiosity, a thing that can never be seen again, and the group is annexed and Tembinoka dead. I wonder, couldn't you send out to me the *first* five Butaritari letters and the Low Archipelago ones (both of which I have lost or mislaid) and I can chop out a perfectly fair volume of what I wish to be preserved. It can keep for the last of the series.

Travels and Excursions, vol. II. Should it not include a paper on S. F. from the Mag. of Art ? The A. E., the New Pacific capital, the Old ditto. *Silver. Squat.* This would give all my works on the States ; and though it

[1] A proposed frontispiece for one of the volumes of the Edinburgh Edition.

ain't very good, it's not so very bad. *Travels and Excursions*, vol. III., to be these resuscitated letters—*Miscellanies*, vol. II.—*comme vous voudrez, cher monsieur!*

Monday, Aug. 13*th.*—I have a sudden call to go up the coast and must hurry up with my information. There has suddenly come to our naval commanders the need of action, they're away up the coast bombarding the Atua rebels. All morning on Saturday the sound of the bombardment of Luatuanu'u kept us uneasy. To-day again the big guns have been sounding further along the coast. One delicious circumstance must not be forgotten. Our blessed President of the Council—a kind of hoary-headed urchin, with the dim, timid eyes of extreme childhood and a kind of beautiful simplicity that endears him to me beyond words—has taken the head of the army—honour to him for it, for his place is really there—and gone up the coast in the congenial company of his housekeeper, a woman coming on for sixty with whom he takes his walks abroad in the morning in his shirt-sleeves, whom he reads to at night (in a kind of Popular History of Germany) in the silence of the Presidential mansion, and with whom (and a couple of camp stools) he walked out last Sunday to behold the paper-chase. I cannot tell you how taken I am with this exploit of the President's and the housekeeper's. It is like Don Quixote, but infinitely superior. If I could only do it without offence, what a subject it would make!

To-morrow morning early I am off up the coast myself. Therefore you must allow me to break off here without further ceremony.—Yours ever,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

TO DR. BAKEWELL

The following is to a physician in Australia.

Vailima, August 7, 1894.

DEAR DR. BAKEWELL,—I am not more than human. I am more human than is wholly convenient, and your

anecdote was welcome. What you say about *unwilling work*, my dear sir, is a consideration always present with me, and yet not easy to give its due weight to. You grow gradually into a certain income; without spending a penny more, with the same sense of restriction as before when you painfully scraped two hundred a year together, you find you have spent, and you cannot well stop spending, a far larger sum; and this expense can only be supported by a certain production. However, I am off work this month, and occupy myself instead in weeding my cacao, paper-chases, and the like. I may tell you, my average of work in favourable circumstances is far greater than you suppose: from six o'clock till eleven at latest,[1] and often till twelve, and again in the afternoon from two to four. My hand is quite destroyed, as you may perceive, to-day to a really unusual extent. I can sometimes write a decent fist still; but I have just returned with my arms all stung from three hours' work in the cacao.—Yours, etc., R. L. S.

To James Payn

Vailima, Upolu, Samoa [*August* 11, 1894].

MY DEAR JAMES PAYN,—I hear from Lang that you are unwell, and it reminds me of two circumstances: First, that it is a very long time since you had the exquisite pleasure of hearing from me; and second, that I have been very often unwell myself and sometimes had to thank you for a grateful anodyne.

They are not good, the circumstances, to write an anodyne letter. The hills and my house at less than (boom) a minute's interval quake with thunder; and though I cannot hear that part of it, shells are falling thick into the fort of Luatuanu'u (boom). It is my friends of the *Curaçoa*, the *Falke*, and the *Bussard* bombarding

[1] *Sic:* query "least"?

(after all these—boom—months) the rebels of Atua. (Boom-boom.) It is most distracting in itself; and the thought of the poor devils in their fort (boom) with their bits of rifles far from pleasant. (Boom-boom.) You can see how quick it goes, and I'll say no more about Mr. Bow-wow, only you must understand the perpetual accompaniment of this discomfortable sound, and make allowances for the value of my copy. It is odd, though, I can well remember, when the Franco-Prussian war began, and I was in Eilean Earraid, far enough from the sound of the loudest cannonade, I could *hear* the shots fired, and I felt the pang in my breast of a man struck. It was sometimes so distressing, so instant, that I lay in the heather on the top of the island, with my face hid, kicking my heels for agony. And now, when I can hear the actual concussion of the air and hills, when I *know* personally the people who stand exposed to it, I am able to go on *tant bien que mal* with a letter to James Payn! The blessings of age, though mighty small, are tangible. I have heard a great deal of them since I came into the world, and now that I begin to taste of them—Well! But this is one, that people do get cured of the excess of sensibility; and I had as lief these people were shot at as myself—or almost, for then I should have some of the fun, such as it is.

You are to conceive me, then, sitting in my little gallery room, shaken by these continual spasms of cannon, and with my eye more or less singly fixed on the imaginary figure of my dear James Payn. I try to see him in bed; no go. I see him instead jumping up in his room in Waterloo Place (where *ex hypothesi* he is not), sitting on the table, drawing out a very black briar-root pipe, and beginning to talk to a slim and ill-dressed visitor in a voice that is good to hear and with a smile that is pleasant to see. (After a little more than half an hour, the voice that was ill to hear has ceased, the cannonade is over.) And I am thinking how I can get an answering smile

wafted over so many leagues of land and water, and can find no way.

I have always been a great visitor of the sick; and one of the sick I visited was W. E. Henley, which did not make very tedious visits, so I'll not get off much purgatory for them. That was in the Edinburgh Infirmary, the old one, the true one, with Georgius Secundus standing and pointing his toe in a niche of the façade; and a mighty fine building it was! And I remember one winter's afternoon, in that place of misery, that Henley and I chanced to fall in talk about James Payn himself. I am wishing you could have heard that talk! I think that would make you smile. We had mixed you up with John Payne, for one thing, and stood amazed at your extraordinary, even painful, versatility; and for another, we found ourselves each students so well prepared for examinations on the novels of the real Mackay. Perhaps, after all, this is worth something in life—to have given so much pleasure to a pair so different in every way as were Henley and I, and to be talked of with so much interest by two such (beg pardon) clever lads!

The cheerful Lang has neglected to tell me what is the matter with you; so, I'm sorry to say, I am cut off from all the customary consolations. I can't say, "Think how much worse it would be if you had a broken leg!" when you may have the crushing repartee up your sleeve, "But it is my leg that is broken." This is a pity. But there are consolations. You are an Englishman (I believe); you are a man of letters; you have never been made C.B.; you hair was not red; you have played cribbage and whist; you did not play either the fiddle or the banjo; you were never an æsthete; you never contributed to ——'s Journal; your name is not Jabez Balfour; you are totally unconnected with the Army and Navy departments; I understand you to have lived within your income—why, cheer up! here are many legitimate causes of congratulation. I seem to be writing an obit-

uary notice. *Absit omen!* But I feel very sure that these considerations will have done you more good than medicine.

By the by, did you ever play piquet? I have fallen a victim to this debilitating game. It is supposed to be scientific; God save the mark, what self-deceivers men are! It is distinctly less so than cribbage. But how fascinating! There is such material opulence about it, such vast ambitions may be realised—and are not; it may be called the Monte Cristo of games. And the thrill with which you take five cards partakes of the nature of lust—and you draw four sevens and a nine, and the seven and nine of a suit that you discarded, and O! but the world is a desert! You may see traces of discouragement in my letter: all due to piquet! There has been a disastrous turn of the luck against me; a month or two ago I was two thousand ahead; now, and for a week back, I have been anything from four thousand eight hundred to five thousand two hundred astern. I have a sixième, my beast of a partner has a septième; and if I have three aces, three kings, three queens, and three knaves (excuse the slight exaggeration), the devil holds quatorze of tens!—I remain, my dear James Payn, your sincere and obliged friend—old friend let me say,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

To Miss Middleton

A letter from the lady to whom this is addressed, and who had been a friend of the Stevenson family in Edinburgh, had called up some memories of a Skye terrier, Jura, of whom readers have heard something already.

Vailima, Samoa, September 9, 1894.

DEAR MISS MIDDLETON,—Your letter has been like the drawing up of a curtain. Of course I remember you very well, and the Skye terrier to which you refer—a heavy, dull, fatted, graceless creature he grew up to be

—was my own particular pet. It may amuse you, perhaps, as much as "The Inn" amused me, if I tell you what made this dog particularly mine. My father was the natural god of all the dogs in our house, and poor Jura took to him of course. Jura was stolen, and kept in prison somewhere for more than a week, as I remember. When he came back Smeoroch had come and taken my father's heart from him. He took his stand like a man, and positively never spoke to my father again from that day until the day of his death. It was the only sign of character he ever showed. I took him up to my room and to be my dog in consequence, partly because I was sorry for him, and partly because I admired his dignity in misfortune.

With best regards and thanks for having reminded me of so many pleasant days, old acquaintances, dead friends, and—what is perhaps as pathetic as any of them —dead dogs, I remain, yours truly,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

TO A. CONAN DOYLE

The following refers to the papers originally contributed by various writers to Mr. Jerome's periodical The Idler, under the title *My First Book*, and afterwards republished in a volume. The references towards the end are to the illustrations in the pages of The Idler.

Vailima, Samoa, September 9, 1894.

MY DEAR CONAN DOYLE,—If you found anything to entertain you in my *Treasure Island* article, it may amuse you to know that you owe it entirely to yourself. *Your* "First Book" was by some accident read aloud one night in my Baronial 'All. I was consumedly amused by it, so was the whole family, and we proceeded to hunt up back Idlers and read the whole series. It is a rattling good series, even people whom you would not expect came in quite the proper tone—Miss Braddon, for instance,

who was really one of the best where all are good—or all but one! . . . In short, I fell in love with "The First Book" series, and determined that it should be all our first books, and that I could not hold back where the white plume of Conan Doyle waved gallantly in the front. I hope they will republish them, though it's a grievous thought to me that that effigy in the German cap—likewise the other effigy of the noisome old man with the long hair, telling indelicate stories to a couple of deformed negresses in a rancid shanty full of wreckage—should be perpetuated. I may seem to speak in pleasantry—it is only a seeming—that German cap, sir, would be found, when I come to die, imprinted on my heart. Enough—my heart is too full. Adieu.—Yours very truly,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

(in a German cap, damn 'em!).

TO SIDNEY COLVIN

[*Vailima, September* 1894.]

MY DEAR COLVIN,—This must be a very measly letter. I have been trying hard to get along with *St. Ives*. I should now lay it aside for a year and I dare say I should make something of it after all. Instead of that, I have to kick against the pricks, and break myself, and spoil the book, if there were anything to spoil, which I am far from saying. I'm as sick of the thing as ever any one can be; it's a rudderless hulk; it's a pagoda, and you can just feel—or I can feel—that it might have been a pleasant story, if it had been only blessed at baptism.

Our politics have gone on fairly well, but the result is still doubtful.

Sept. 10*th*.—I know I have something else to say to you, but unfortunately I awoke this morning with colly-wobbles, and had to take a small dose of laudanum with the usual consequences of dry throat, intoxicated legs,

partial madness and total imbecility; and for the life of me I cannot remember what it is. I have likewise mislaid your letter amongst the accumulations on my table, not that there was anything in it. Altogether I am in a poor state. I forgot to tell Baxter that the dummy had turned up and is a fine, personable-looking volume and very good reading. Please communicate this to him.

I have just remembered an incident that I really must not let pass. You have heard a great deal more than you wanted about our political prisoners. Well, one day, about a fortnight ago, the last of them was set free—Old Poè, whom I think I must have mentioned to you, the father-in-law of my cook, was one that I had had a great deal of trouble with. I had taken the doctor to see him, got him out on sick leave, and when he was put back again gave bail for him. I must not forget that my wife ran away with him out of the prison on the doctor's orders and with the complicity of our friend the gaoler, who really and truly got the sack for the exploit. As soon as he was finally liberated, Poè called a meeting of his fellow-prisoners. All Sunday they were debating what they were to do, and on Monday morning I got an obscure hint from Talolo that I must expect visitors during the day who were coming to consult me. These consultations I am now very well used to, and seeing first, that I generally don't know what to advise, and second that they sometimes don't take my advice—though in some notable cases they have taken it, generally to my own wonder with pretty good results—I am not very fond of these calls. They minister to a sense of dignity, but not peace of mind, and consume interminable time, always in the morning too, when I can't afford it. However, this was to be a new sort of consultation. Up came Poè and some eight other chiefs, squatted in a big circle around the old dining-room floor, now the smoking-room. And the family, being represented by Lloyd, Graham, Belle, Austin and myself, proceeded to exchange

the necessary courtesies. Then their talking man began. He said that they had been in prison, that I had always taken an interest in them, that they had now been set at liberty without condition, whereas some of the other chiefs who had been liberated before them were still under bond to work upon the roads, and that this had set them considering what they might do to testify their gratitude. They had therefore agreed to work upon my road as a free gift. They went on to explain that it was only to be on my road, on the branch that joins my house with the public way.

Now I was very much gratified at this compliment, although (to one used to natives) it seemed rather a hollow one. It meant only that I should have to lay out a good deal of money on tools and food and to give wages under the guise of presents to some workmen who were most of them old and in ill-health. Conceive how much I was surprised and touched when I heard the whole scheme explained to me. They were to return to their provinces, and collect their families; some of the young men were to live in Apia with a boat, and ply up and down the coast to A'ana and Atua (our own Tuamasaga being quite drained of resources) in order to supply the working squad with food. Tools they did ask for, but it was especially mentioned that I was to make no presents. In short, the whole of this little "presentation" to me had been planned with a good deal more consideration than goes usually with a native campaign.

[I sat on the opposite side of the circle to the talking man. His face was quite calm and high-bred as he went through the usual Samoan expressions of politeness and compliment, but when he came on to the object of their visit, on their love and gratitude to Tusitala, how his name was always in their prayers, and his goodness to them when they had no other friend, was their most cherished memory, he warmed up to real, burning, genuine feeling. I had never seen the Samoan mask of reserve

laid aside before, and it touched me more than anything else. A.M.]

This morning as ever was, bright and early up came the whole gang of them, a lot of sturdy, common-looking lads they seemed to be for the most part, and fell to on my new road. Old Poè was in the highest of good spirits, and looked better in health than he has done any time in two years, being positively rejuvenated by the success of his scheme. He jested as he served out the new tools, and I am sorry to say damned the Government up hill and down dale, probably with a view to show off his position as a friend of the family before his workboys. Now, whether or not their impulse will last them through the road does not matter to me one hair. It is the fact that they have attempted it, that they have volunteered and are now really trying to execute a thing that was never before heard of in Samoa. Think of it! It is road-making—the most fruitful cause (after taxes) of all rebellions in Samoa, a thing to which they could not be wiled with money nor driven by punishment. It does give me a sense of having done something in Samoa after all.

Now there's one long story for you about "my blacks."
—Yours ever, ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

To Charles Baxter

The following was written on hearing of the death of his friend's father.

[*Vailima, September* 1894.]

MY DEAR CHARLES,—. . . Well, there is no more Edmund Baxter now; and I think I may say I know how you feel. He was one of the best, the kindest, and the most genial men I ever knew. I shall always remember his brisk, cordial ways and the essential goodness which he showed me whenever we met with gratitude. And

the always is such a little while now! He is another of the landmarks gone; when it comes to my own turn to lay my weapons down, I shall do so with thankfulness and fatigue; and whatever be my destiny afterward, I shall be glad to lie down with my fathers in honour. It is human at least, if not divine. And these deaths make me think of it with an ever greater readiness. Strange that you should be beginning a new life, when I, who am a little your junior, am thinking of the end of mine. But I have had hard lines; I have been so long waiting for death, I have unwrapped my thoughts from about life so long, that I have not a filament left to hold by; I have done my fiddling so long under Vesuvius, that I have almost forgotten to play, and can only wait for the eruption, and think it long of coming. Literally, no man has more wholly outlived life than I. And still it's good fun. R. L. S.

To R. A. M. Stevenson

Stevenson had received from his cousin a letter announcing, among other things, the birth of a son to the writer, and rambling suggestively, as may be guessed from the following reply, over many disconnected themes: the ethnology of Scotland, paternity and heredity, civilisation *versus* primitive customs and instincts, the story of their own descent, the method of writing in collaboration, education, Christianity and sex, the religion of conduct, anarchism, etc.; all which matters are here discursively touched on. "Old Skene" is, of course, the distinguished Scottish antiquarian and historian, William Forbes Skene, in whose firm (Skene & Edwards, W.S.) Stevenson had for a time served irregularly enough as an unpaid clerk.

[*Vailima, September* 1894.]

DEAR BOB,—You are in error about the Picts. They were a Gaelic race, spoke a Celtic tongue, and we have no evidence that I know of that they were blacker than other Celts. The Balfours, I take it, were plainly Celts; their name shows it—the "cold croft," it means; so does their country. Where the *black* Scotch come from nobody knows; but I recognise with you the fact that

the whole of Britain is rapidly and progressively becoming more pigmented; already in one man's life I can decidedly trace a difference in the children about a school door. But colour is not an essential part of a man or a race. Take my Polynesians, an Asiatic people probably from the neighbourhood of the Persian Gulf. They range through any amount of shades, from the burnt hue of the Low Archipelago islander, which seems half negro, to the "bleached" pretty women of the Marquesas (close by on the map), who come out for a festival no darker than an Italian; their colour seems to vary directly with the degree of exposure to the sun. And, as with negroes, the babes are born white; only it should seem a *little sack* of pigment at the lower part of the spine, which presently spreads over the whole field. Very puzzling. But to return. The Picts furnish to-day perhaps a third of the population of Scotland, say another third for Scots and Britons, and the third for Norse and Angles is a bad third. Edinburgh was a Pictish place. But the fact is, we don't know their frontiers. Tell some of your journalist friends with a good style to popularise old Skene; or say your prayers, and read him for yourself; he was a Great Historian, and I was his blessed clerk, and did not know it; and you will not be in a state of grace about the Picts till you have studied him. J. Horne Stevenson (do you know him?) is working this up with me, and the fact is—it's not interesting to the public—but it's interesting, and very interesting, in itself, and just now very embarrassing—this rural parish supplied Glasgow with such a quantity of Stevensons in the beginning of last century! There is just a link wanting; and we might be able to go back to the eleventh century, always undistinguished, but clearly traceable. When I say just a link, I guess I may be taken to mean a dozen. What a singular thing is this undistinguished perpetuation of a family throughout the centuries, and the sudden bursting forth of character and capacity that began with

our grandfather! But as I go on in life, day by day, I become more of a bewildered child; I cannot get used to this world, to procreation, to heredity, to sight, to hearing; the commonest things are a burthen. The prim obliterated polite face of life, and the broad, bawdy, and orgiastic—or mænadic—foundations, form a spectacle to which no habit reconciles me; and "I could wish my days to be bound each to each" by the same open-mouthed wonder. They *are* anyway, and whether I wish it or not.

I remember very well your attitude to life, this conventional surface of it. You had none of that curiosity for the social stage directions, the trivial *ficelles* of the business; it is simian, but that is how the wild youth of man is captured; you wouldn't imitate, hence you kept free—a wild dog, outside the kennel—and came dam near starving for your pains. The key to the business is of course the belly; difficult as it is to keep that in view in the zone of three miraculous meals a day in which we were brought up. Civilisation has become reflex with us; you might think that hunger was the name of the best sauce; but hunger to the cold solitary under a bush of a rainy night is the name of something quite different. I defend civilisation for the thing it is, for the thing it has *come* to be, the standpoint of a real old Tory. My ideal would be the Female Clan. But how can you turn these crowding dumb multitudes *back?* They don't do anything *because;* they do things, write able articles, stitch shoes, dig, from the purely simian impulse. Go and reason with monkeys!

No, I am right about Jean Lillie. Jean Lillie, our double great-grandmother, the daughter of David Lillie, sometime Deacon of the Wrights, married, first, Alan Stevenson, who died May 26, 1774, "at Santt Kittes of a fiver," by whom she had Robert Stevenson, born 8th June 1772; and, second, in May or June 1787, Thomas Smith, a widower, and already the father of our grand-

mother. This improbable double connection always tends to confuse a student of the family, Thomas Smith being doubly our great-grandfather.

I looked on the perpetuation of our honoured name with veneration. My mother collared one of the photos, of course; the other is stuck up on my wall as the chief of our sept. Do you know any of the Gaelic-Celtic sharps? you might ask what the name means. It puzzles me. I find a *M'Stein* and a *MacStephane;* and our own great-grandfather always called himself Steenson, though he wrote it Stevenson. There are at least three *places* called Stevenson—*Stevenson* in Cunningham, *Stevenson* in Peebles, and *Stevenson* in Haddington. And it was not the Celtic trick, I understand, to call places after people. I am going to write to Sir Herbert Maxwell about the name, but you might find some one.

Get the Anglo-Saxon heresy out of your head; they superimposed their language, they scarce modified the race; only in Berwickshire and Roxburgh have they very largely affected the place names. The Scandinavians did much more to Scotland than the Angles. The Saxons didn't come.

Enough of this sham antiquarianism. Yes, it is in the matter of the book[1] of course, that collaboration shows; as for the manner, it is superficially all mine in the sense that the last copy is all in my hand. Lloyd did not even put pen to paper in the Paris scenes or the Barbizon scene; it was no good; he wrote and often rewrote all the rest; I had the best service from him on the character of Nares. You see, we had been just meeting the man, and his memory was full of the man's words and ways. And Lloyd is an impressionist, pure and simple. The great difficulty of collaboration is that you can't explain what you mean. I know what kind of effect I mean a character to give—what kind of *tache* he is to make; but how am I to tell my collaborator in words? Hence

[1] Of *The Wrecker.*

it was necessary to say, "Make him So-and-so"; and this was all right for Nares and Pinkerton and Loudon Dodd, whom we both knew, but for Bellairs, for instance —a man with whom I passed ten minutes fifteen years ago—what was I to say? and what could Lloyd do? I, as a personal artist, can begin a character with only a haze in my head, but how if I have to translate the haze into words before I begin? In our manner of collaboration (which I think the only possible—I mean that of one person being responsible, and giving the *coup de pouce* to every part of the work) I was spared the obviously hopeless business of trying to explain to my collaborator what *style* I wished a passage to be treated in. These are the times that illustrate to a man the inadequacy of spoken language. Now—to be just to written language —I can (or could) find a language for my every mood, but how could I *tell* any one beforehand what this effect was to be, which it would take every art that I possessed, and hours and hours of deliberate labour and selection and rejection, to produce? These are the impossibilities of collaboration. Its immediate advantage is to focus two minds together on the stuff, and to produce in consequence an extraordinarily greater richness of purview, consideration, and invention. The hardest chapter of all was "Cross Questions and Crooked Answers." You would not believe what that cost us before it assumed the least unity and colour. Lloyd wrote it at least thrice, and I at least five times—this is from memory. And was that last chapter worth the trouble it cost? Alas, that I should ask the question! Two classes of men—the artist and the educationalist—are sworn, on soul and conscience, not to ask it. You get an ordinary, grinning, red-headed boy, and you have to educate him. Faith supports you; you give your valuable hours, the boy does not seem to profit, but that way your duty lies, for which you are paid, and you must persevere. Education has always seemed to me one of the few possible and dignified ways of

life. A sailor, a shepherd, a schoolmaster—to a less degree, a soldier—and (I don't know why, upon my soul, except as a sort of schoolmaster's unofficial assistant, and a kind of acrobat in tights) an artist, almost exhaust the category.

If I had to begin again—I know not—*si jeunesse savait, si vieillesse pouvait* . . . I know not at all—I believe I should try to honour Sex more religiously. The worst of our education is that Christianity does not recognise and hallow Sex. It looks askance at it, over its shoulder, oppressed as it is by reminiscences of hermits and Asiatic self-tortures. It is a terrible hiatus in our modern religions that they cannot see and make venerable that which they ought to see first and hallow most. Well, it is so; I cannot be wiser than my generation.

But no doubt there is something great in the half-success that has attended the effort of turning into an emotional religion, Bald Conduct, without any appeal, or almost none, to the figurative, mysterious, and constitutive facts of life. Not that conduct is not constitutive, but dear! it's dreary! On the whole, conduct is better dealt with on the cast-iron "gentleman" and duty formula, with as little fervour and poetry as possible; stoical and short. . . . There is a new something or other in the wind, which exercises me hugely: anarchy,—I mean, anarchism. People who (for pity's sake) commit dastardly murders very basely, die like saints, and leave beautiful letters behind 'em (did you see Vaillant to his daughter? it was the New Testament over again); people whose conduct is inexplicable to me, and yet their spiritual life higher than that of most. This is just what the early Christians must have seemed to the Romans. Is this, then, a new *drive*[1] among the monkeys? Mind you, Bob, if they go on being martyred a few years more, the gross, dull, not unkindly bourgeois may get tired or ashamed or afraid of going on martyring; and the anarchists come out at the top just like the early Christians. That

[1] *Trieb*, impulse.

is, of course, they will step into power as a *personnel*, but God knows what they may believe when they come to do so; it can't be stranger or more improbable than what Christianity had come to be by the same time.

Your letter was easily read, the pagination presented no difficulty, and I read it with much edification and gusto. To look back, and to stereotype one bygone humour—what a hopeless thing! The mind runs ever in a thousand eddies like a river between cliffs. You (the ego) are always spinning round in it, east, west, north, and south. You are twenty years old, and forty, and five, and the next moment you are freezing at an imaginary eighty; you are never the plain forty-four that you should be by dates. (The most philosophical language is the Gaelic, which has *no present tense*—and the most useless.) How, then, to choose some former age, and stick there? R. L. S.

To Sir Herbert Maxwell

Vailima, Samoa, September 10, 1894.

DEAR SIR HERBERT MAXWELL,—I am emboldened by reading your very interesting Rhind Lectures to put to you a question: What is my name, Stevenson?

I find it in the forms Stevinetoun, Stevensoune, Stevensonne, Stenesone, Stewinsoune, M'Stein, and MacStephane. My family, and (as far as I can gather) the majority of the inglorious clan, hailed from the borders of Cunningham and Renfrew, and the upper waters of the Clyde. In the Barony of Bothwell was the seat of the laird Stevenson of Stevenson; but, as of course you know, there is a parish in Cunningham and places in Peebles and Haddington bearing the same name.

If you can at all help me, you will render me a real service which I wish I could think of some manner to repay.—Believe me, yours truly,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

P.S.—I should have added that I have perfect evidence before me that (for some obscure reason) Stevenson was a favourite alias with the M'Gregors.

To Sidney Colvin

Vailima, Samoa, October 6th, 1894.

MY DEAR COLVIN,—We have had quite an interesting month and mostly in consideration of that road which I think I told you was about to be made. It was made without a hitch, though I confess I was considerably surprised. When they got through, I wrote a speech to them, sent it down to a Missionary to be translated, and invited the lot to a feast. I thought a good deal of this feast. The occasion was really interesting. I wanted to pitch it in hot. And I wished to have as many influential witnesses present as possible. Well, as it drew towards the day I had nothing but refusals. Everybody supposed it was to be a political occasion, that I had made a hive of rebels up here, and was going to push for new hostilities.

The Amanuensis has been ill, and after the above trial petered out. I must return to my own, lone Waverley. The captain refused, telling me why; and at last I had to beat up for people almost with prayers. However, I got a good lot, as you will see by the accompanying newspaper report. The road contained this inscription, drawn up by the chiefs themselves:

"The Road of Gratitude

"Considering the great love of Tusitala in his loving care of us in our distress in the prison, we have therefore prepared a splendid gift. It shall never be muddy, it shall endure for ever, this road that we have dug."

This the newspaper reporter could not give, not knowing any Samoan. The same reason explains his references to Seumanutafa's speech, which was not long and *was*

important, for it was a speech of courtesy and forgiveness to his former enemies. It was very much applauded. Secondly, it was not Poè, it was Mataafā (don't confuse with Mataafa) who spoke for the prisoners. Otherwise it is extremely correct.

I beg your pardon for so much upon my aboriginals. Even you must sympathise with me in this unheard-of compliment, and my having been able to deliver so severe a sermon with acceptance. It remains a nice point of conscience what I should wish done in the matter. I think this meeting, its immediate results, and the terms of what I said to them, desirable to be known. It will do a little justice to me, who have not had too much justice done me. At the same time, to send this report to the papers is truly an act of self-advertisement, and I dislike the thought. Query, in a man who has been so much calumniated, is that not justifiable? I do not know; be my judge. Mankind is too complicated for me; even myself. Do I wish to advertise? I think I do, God help me! I have had hard times here, as every man must have who mixes up with public business; and I bemoan myself, knowing that all I have done has been in the interest of peace and good government; and having once delivered my mind, I would like it, I think, to be made public. But the other part of me *regimbs*.[1]

I know I am at a climacteric for all men who live by their wits, so I do not despair. But the truth is I am pretty nearly useless at literature, and I will ask you to spare *St. Ives* when it goes to you; it is a sort of *Count Robert of Paris*. But I hope rather a *Dombey and Son*, to be succeeded by *Our Mutual Friend* and *Great Expectations* and *A Tale of Two Cities*. No toil has been spared

[1] It seemed an obvious duty to publish the speech in question through the English press, as the best proof both of Stevenson's wise and understanding methods of dealing with his native friends, and of the affection and authority which he enjoyed among them. I have reprinted it, as a necessary supplement to this letter, in Appendix II. at end of the present volume.

over the ungrateful canvas; and it *will not* come together, and I must live, and my family. Were it not for my health, which made it impossible, I could not find it in my heart to forgive myself that I did not stick to an honest, commonplace trade when I was young, which might have now supported me during these ill years. But do not suppose me to be down in anything else; only, for the nonce, my skill deserts me, such as it is, or was. It was a very little dose of inspiration, and a pretty little trick of style, long lost, improved by the most heroic industry. So far, I have managed to please the journalists. But I am a fictitious article and have long known it. I am read by journalists, by my fellow-novelists, and by boys; with these, *incipit et explicit* my vogue. Good thing anyway! for it seems to have sold the Edition. And I look forward confidently to an aftermath; I do not think my health can be so hugely improved, without some subsequent improvement in my brains. Though, of course, there is the possibility that literature is a morbid secretion, and abhors health! I do not think it is possible to have fewer illusions than I. I sometimes wish I had more. They are amusing. But I cannot take myself seriously as an artist; the limitations are so obvious. I did take myself seriously as a workman of old, but my practice has fallen off. I am now an idler and cumberer of the ground; it may be excused to me perhaps by twenty years of industry and ill-health, which have taken the cream off the milk.

As I was writing this last sentence, I heard the strident rain drawing near across the forest, and by the time I was come to the word "cream" it burst upon my roof, and has since redoubled, and roared upon it. A very welcome change. All smells of the good wet earth, sweetly, with a kind of Highland touch; the crystal rods of the shower, as I look up, have drawn their criss-cross over everything; and a gentle and very welcome coolness comes up around me in little draughts, blessed

draughts, not chilling, only equalising the temperature. Now the rain is off in this spot, but I hear it roaring still in the nigh neighbourhood—and that moment, I was driven from the verandah by random raindrops, spitting at me through the Japanese blinds. These are not tears with which the page is spotted! Now the windows stream, the roof reverberates. It is good; it answers something which is in my heart; I know not what; old memories of the wet moorland belike.

Well, it has blown by again, and I am in my place once more, with an accompaniment of perpetual dripping on the verandah—and very much inclined for a chat. The exact subject I do not know! It will be bitter at least, and that is strange, for my attitude is essentially *not* bitter, but I have come into these days when a man sees above all the seamy side, and I have dwelt some time in a small place where he has an opportunity of reading little motives that he would miss in the great world, and indeed, to-day, I am almost ready to call the world an error. Because? Because I have not drugged myself with successful work, and there are all kinds of trifles buzzing in my ear, unfriendly trifles, from the least to the—well, to the pretty big. All these that touch me are Pretty Big; and yet none touch me in the least, if rightly looked at, except the one eternal burthen to go on making an income for my family. That is rightly the root and ground of my ill. The jingling, tingling, damned mint sauce is the trouble always; and if I could find a place where I could lie down and give up for (say) two years, and allow the sainted public to support me, if it were a lunatic asylum, wouldn't I go, just! But we can't have both extremes at once, worse luck! I should like to put my savings into a proprietarian investment, and retire in the meanwhile into a communistic retreat, which is double-dealing. But you men with aries don't know how alas family weighs on a fellow's mind.

I hear the article in next week's *Herald* is to be a great

affair, and all the officials who came to me the other day are to be attacked! This is the unpleasant side of being (without a salary) in public life; I will leave any one to judge if my speech was well intended, and calculated to do good. It was even daring—I assure you one of the chiefs looked like a fiend at my description of Samoan warfare. Your warning was not needed; we are all determined to *keep the peace* and to *hold our peace.* I know, my dear fellow, how remote all this sounds! Kindly pardon your friend. I have my life to live here; these interests are for me immediate; and if I do not write of them, I might as soon not write at all. There is the difficulty in a distant correspondence. It is perhaps easy for me to enter into and understand your interests; I own it is difficult for you; but you must just wade through them for friendship's sake, and try to find tolerable what is vital for your friend. I cannot forbear challenging you to it, as to intellectual lists. It is the proof of intelligence, the proof of not being a barbarian, to be able to enter into something outside of oneself, something that does not touch one's next neighbour in the city omnibus.

Good-bye, my lord. May your race continue and you flourish.—Yours ever, TUSITALA.

To Alison Cunningham

For a fuller account of the road-making affair here mentioned, see pp. 431, 462.

[*Vailima*] *October 8th*, 1894.

MY DEAR CUMMY,—So I hear you are ailing? Think shame to yoursell! So you think there is nothing better to be done with time than that? and be sure we can all do much ourselves to decide whether we are to be ill or well! like a man on the gymnastic bars. We are all pretty well. As for me, there is nothing the matter with me in the world, beyond the disgusting circumstance that I am not so young as once I was. Lloyd has a gymnastic

machine, and practises upon it every morning for an hour: he is beginning to be a kind of young Samson. Austin grows fat and brown, and gets on not so ill with his lessons, and my mother is in great price. We are having knock-me-down weather for heat; I never remember it so hot before, and I fancy it means we are to have a hurricane again this year, I think; since we came here, we have not had a single gale of wind! The Pacific is but a child to the North Sea; but when she does get excited, and gets up and girds herself, she can do something good. We have had a very interesting business here. I helped the chiefs who were in prison; and when they were set free, what should they do but offer to make a part of my road for me out of gratitude? Well, I was ashamed to refuse, and the trumps dug my road for me, and put up this inscription on a board:—

"*Considering the great love of His Excellency Tusitala in his loving care for us in our tribulation in the prison we have made this great gift; it shall never be muddy, it shall go on for ever, this road that we have dug!*" We had a great feast when it was done, and I read them a kind of lecture, which I dare say Auntie will have, and can let you see. Weel, guid bye to ye, and joy be wi' ye! I hae nae time to say mair. They say I'm gettin' *fat*—a fact!—Your laddie, with all love,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

To JAMES PAYN

Vailima, Samoa, Nov. 4, 1894.

MY DEAR JAMES PAYN,—I am asked to relate to you a little incident of domestic life at Vailima. I had read your *Gleams of Memory*, No. 1; it then went to my wife, to Osbourne, to the cousin that is within my gates, and to my respected amanuensis, Mrs. Strong. Sunday approached. In the course of the afternoon I was attracted to the great 'all—the winders is by Vanderputty, which

upon entering I beheld a memorable scene. The floor was bestrewn with the forms of midshipmen from the *Curaçoa*—" boldly say a wilderness of gunroom "—and in the midst of this sat Mrs. Strong throned on the sofa and reading aloud *Gleams of Memory*. They had just come the length of your immortal definition of boyhood in the concrete, and I had the pleasure to see the whole party dissolve under its influence with inextinguishable laughter. I thought this was not half bad for arthritic gout! Depend upon it, sir, when I go into the arthritic gout business, I shall be done with literature, or at least with the funny business. It is quite true I have my battle-fields behind me. I have done perhaps as much work as anybody else under the most deplorable conditions. But two things fall to be noticed: In the first place, I never was in actual pain; and in the second, I was never funny. I'll tell you the worst day that I remember. I had a hemorrhage, and was not allowed to speak; then, induced by the devil, or an errant doctor, I was led to partake of that bowl which neither cheers nor inebriates —the castor-oil bowl. Now, when castor-oil goes right, it is one thing; but when it goes wrong, it is another. And it went wrong with me that day. The waves of faintness and nausea succeeded each other for twelve hours, and I do feel a legitimate pride in thinking that I stuck to my work all through and wrote a good deal of *Admiral Guinea* (which I might just as well not have written for all the reward it ever brought me) in spite of the barbarous bad conditions. I think that is my great boast; and it seems a little thing alongside of your *Gleams of Memory* illustrated by spasms of arthritic gout. We really should have an order of merit in the trade of letters. For valour, Scott would have had it; Pope too; myself on the strength of that castor-oil; and James Payn would be a Knight Commander. The worst of it is, though Lang tells me you exhibit the courage of Huish, that not even an order can alleviate the wretched annoy-

ance of the business. I have always said that there is nothing like pain; toothache, dumb-ague, arthritic gout, it does not matter what you call it, if the screw is put upon the nerves sufficiently strong, there is nothing left in heaven or in earth that can interest the sufferer. Still, even to this there is the consolation that it cannot last for ever. Either you will be relieved and have a good hour again before the sun goes down, or else you will be liberated. It is something after all (although not much) to think that you are leaving a brave example; that other literary men love to remember, as I am sure they will love to remember, everything about you—your sweetness, your brightness, your helpfulness to all of us, and in particular those one or two really adequate and noble papers which you have been privileged to write during these last years.—With the heartiest and kindest good-will, I remain, yours ever, R. L. S.

To Sidney Colvin

This was the last letter I received from my friend. On the morning of his death the following month he spoke of being behindhand with his December letter and of his intention to write it next day.

[*Vailima, November* 1894.]

DEAR COLVIN,—Saturday there was a ball to the ship, and on Sunday Gurr had a child to be baptized. Belle was to be godmother and had to be got down; which was impossible, as the jester Euclid says. However, we had four men of very different heights take the poles of a sort of bier and carry her shoulder high down the road, till we met a trap. On the return journey on Sunday, they were led by Austin playing (?) on a bugle, and you have no idea how picturesque a business it was; the four half-naked bearers, the cane lounge at that height from the ground, and Belle in black and pretty pale reclining very like a dead warrior of yore. However she wasn't dead yet. All the rest of the afternoon we hung

about and had consultations about the baptism. Just as we went in to dinner, I saw the moon rise accurately full, looking five times greater than nature, and the face that we try to decipher in its silver disk wearing an obliterated but benignant expression. The ball followed; bluejackets and officers danced indiscriminately, after their pleasant fashion; and Belle, who lay in the hotel verandah, and held a sort of reception all night, had her longest visit from one of the blue-jackets, her partner in the last ball. About one on the Sunday morning all was over, and we went to bed—I, alas! only to get up again, my room being in the verandah, where a certain solemnly absurd family conclave (all drunk) was being held until (I suppose) three. By six, I was awake, and went out on the verandah. On the east the dawn had broken, cold and pink and rust colour, and the marshes were all smoking whitely and blowing into the bay like smoke, but on the west, all was golden. The street was empty, and right over it hung the setting moon, accurately round, yellow as an apricot, but slumberous, with an effect of afternoon you would not believe if you had not seen it. Then followed a couple of hours on the verandah I would be glad to forget. By seven X. Y. had joined me, as drunk as they make 'em. As he sat and talked to me, he smelt of the charnel house, methought. He looked so old (he is one month my senior); he spoke so silly; his poor leg is again covered with boils, which will spell death to him; and—enough. That interview has made me a teetotaller. O, it is bad to grow old. For me, it is practically hell. I do not like the consolations of age. I was born a young man; I have continued so; and before I end, a pantaloon, a driveller—enough again. But I don't enjoy getting elderly. Belle and I got home about three in the afternoon, she having in the meantime renounced all that makes life worth living in the name of little Miss Gurr, and I seriously reflecting on renouncing the kindly bowl in earnest! Presently after arrived the news of

Margery Ide (the C.J.'s daughter) being seriously ill, alarmingly ill. Fanny wanted to go down; it was a difficult choice; she was not fit for it; on the other hand (and by all accounts) the patient would die if she did not get better nursing. So we made up our own minds, and F. and I set out about dusk, came to the C.J.'s in the middle of dinner, and announced our errand. I am glad to say the C.J. received her very willingly; and I came home again, leaving her behind, where she was certainly much wanted.

Nov. 4th.—You ask about *St. Ives*. No, there is no Burford Bridge in it, and no Boney. He *is* a squire of dames, and there are petticoats in the story, and damned bad ones too, and it is of a tolerable length, a hundred thousand, I believe, at least. Also, since you are curious on the point, St. Ives learned his English from a Mr. Vicary, an English lawyer, a prisoner in France. He must have had a fine gift of languages!

Things are going on here in their usual gently disheartening gait. The Treaty Officials are both good fellows whom I can't help liking, but who will never make a hand of Samoa.—Yours ever,

R. L. Stevenson.

To Professor Meiklejohn

Congratulating an old friend of Savile Club days (see vol. xxiii. p. 263) on his sailor son.

Vailima, Samoa, Nov. 6th, 1894.

my dear meiklejohn,—Greeting! This is but a word to say how much we felicitate ourselves on having made the acquaintance of Hughie. He is having a famous good chance on board the *Curaçoa*, which is the best ship I have ever seen. And as for himself, he is a most engaging boy, of whom you may very well be proud, and I have no mortal manner of doubt but what you are. He comes up here very often, where he is a great favourite

with my ladies, and sings me "the melancholy airs of my native land" with much acceptancy. His name has recently become changed in Vailima. Beginning with the courteous "Mr. Meiklejohn," it shaded off into the familiar "Hughie," and finally degenerated into "the Whitrett."[1] I hear good reports of him abroad and ashore, and I scarce need to add my own testimony.

Hughie tells me you have gone into the publishing business, whereat I was much shocked. My own affairs with publishers are now in the most flourishing state, owing to my ingenuity in leaving them to be dealt with by a Scotch Writer to the Signet. It has produced revolutions in the book trade and my banking account. I tackled the Whitrett severely on a grammar you had published, which I had not seen and condemned out of hand and in the broadest Lallan. I even condescended on the part of that grammar which I thought to be the worst and condemned your presentation of the English verb unmercifully. It occurs to me, since you are a publisher, that the least thing you could do would be to send me a copy of that grammar to correct my estimate. But I fear I am talking too long to one of the enemy. I begin to hear in fancy the voice of Meiklejohn upraised in the Savile Club: "No quarter to publishers!" So I will ask you to present my compliments to Mrs. Meiklejohn upon her son, and to accept for yourself the warmest reminiscences of auld lang syne.—Yours sincerely,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

To Lieutenant Eeles

Vailima, Samoa, November 24, 1894.

MY DEAR EELES,—The hand, as you will perceive (and also the spelling!), is Teuila's, but the scrannel voice is

[1] Whitrett or Whitrack is Scots for a weasel: why applied to Mr. Meiklejohn I know not.

what remains of Tusitala's. First of all, for business. When you go to London you are to charter a hansom cab and proceed to the Museum. It is particular fun to do this on Sundays when the Monument is shut up. Your cabman expostulates with you, you persist. The cabman drives up in front of the closed gates and says, "I told you so, sir." You breathe in the porter's ears the mystic name of *Colvin*, and he immediately unfolds the iron barrier. You drive in, and doesn't your cabman think you're a swell. A lord mayor is nothing to it. Colvin's door is the only one in the eastern gable of the building. Send in your card to him with "From R. L. S." in the corner, and the machinery will do the rest. Henry James's address is 34 De Vere Mansions West. I cannot remember where the place is; I cannot even remember on which side of the park. But it's one of those big Cromwell Road-looking deserted thoroughfares out west in Kensington or Bayswater, or between the two; and anyway Colvin will be able to put you on the direct track for Henry James. I do not send formal introductions, as I have taken the liberty to prepare both of them for seeing you already.

Hoskyn is staying with us.

It is raining dismally. The Curaçoa track is hardly passable, but it must be trod to-morrow by the degenerate feet of their successor the Wallaroos. I think it a very good account of these last that we don't think them either deformed or habitual criminals—they seem to be a kindly lot.

The doctor will give you all the gossip. I have preferred in this letter to stick to the strictly solid and necessary. With kind messages from all in the house to all in the wardroom, all in the gunroom, and (may we dare to breathe it) to him who walks abaft, believe me, my dear Eeles, yours ever,

R. L. Stevenson.

To Sir Herbert Maxwell

Vailima, Samoa, December 1, 1894.

DEAR SIR HERBERT,—Thank you very much for your long and kind letter. I shall certainly take your advice and call my cousin, the Lyon King, into council. It is certainly a very interesting subject, though I don't suppose it can possibly lead to anything, this connection between the Stevensons and M'Gregors. Alas! your invitation is to me a mere derision. My chances of visiting Heaven are about as valid as my chances of visiting Monreith. Though I should like well to see you, shrunken into a cottage, a literary Lord of Ravenscraig. I suppose it is the inevitable doom of all those who dabble in Scotch soil; but really your fate is the more blessed. I cannot conceive anything more grateful to me, or more amusing or more picturesque, than to live in a cottage outside your own park-walls.—With renewed thanks, believe me, dear Sir Herbert, yours very truly,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

To Andrew Lang

The following refers of course to *Weir of Hermiston*, the chief character of which was studied from the traditions of Lord Braxfield, and on which Stevenson was working at the full height of his powers when death overtook him two days later.

Vailima, Samoa, December 1, 1894.

MY DEAR LANG,—For the portrait of Braxfield, much thanks! It is engraved from the same Raeburn portrait that I saw in '76 or '77 with so extreme a gusto that I have ever since been Braxfield's humble servant, and am now trying, as you know, to stick him into a novel. Alas! one might as well try to stick in Napoleon. The picture shall be framed and hung up in my study. Not only as

a memento of you, but as a perpetual encouragement to do better with his Lordship. I have not yet received the transcripts. They must be very interesting. Do you know I picked up the other day an old Longman's where I found an article of yours that I had missed, about Christie's? I read it with great delight. The year ends with us pretty much as it began, among wars and rumours of wars, and a vast and splendid exhibition of official incompetence.—Yours ever, R. L. Stevenson.

To Edmund Gosse

The next, and last, letter is to Mr. Gosse, dated also only two days before the writer's death. It acknowledges the dedication "To Tusitala" of that gentleman's volume of poems, *In Russet and Silver*, just received.

Vailima, Samoa, December 1, 1894.

I am afraid, my dear Weg, that this must be the result of bribery and corruption! The volume to which the dedication stands as preface seems to me to stand alone in your work; it is so natural, so personal, so sincere, so articulate in substance, and what you always were sure of —so rich in adornment.

Let me speak first of the dedication. I thank you for it from the heart. It is beautifully said, beautifully and kindly felt; and I should be a churl indeed if I were not grateful, and an ass if I were not proud. I remember when Symonds dedicated a book to me; I wrote and told him of "the pang of gratified vanity" with which I had read it. The pang was present again, but how much more sober and autumnal—like your volume. Let me tell you a story, or remind you of a story. In the year of grace something or other, anything between '76 and '78, I mentioned to you in my usual autobiographical and inconsiderate manner that I was hard up. You said promptly that you had a balance at your banker's, and could make it convenient to let me have a cheque, and I

accepted and got the money—how much was it ?—twenty or perhaps thirty pounds ? I know not—but it was a great convenience. The same evening, or the next day, I fell in conversation (in my usual autobiographical and . . . see above) with a denizen of the Savile Club, name now gone from me, only his figure and a dim three-quarter view of his face remaining. To him I mentioned that you had given me a loan, remarking easily that of course it didn't matter to you. Whereupon he read me a lecture, and told me how it really stood with you financially. He was pretty serious ; fearing, as I could not help perceiving, that I should take too light a view of the responsibility and the service (I was always thought too light—the irresponsible jester—you remember. O, *quantum mutatus ab illo !*) If I remember rightly, the money was repaid before the end of the week—or, to be more exact and a trifle pedantic, the se'nnight—but the service has never been forgotten ; and I send you back this piece of ancient history, *consule Planco,* as a salute for your dedication, and propose that we should drink the health of the nameless one, who opened my eyes as to the true nature of what you did for me on that occasion.

But here comes my Amanuensis, so we'll get on more swimmingly now. You will understand perhaps that what so particularly pleased me in the new volume, what seems to me to have so personal and original a note, are the middle-aged pieces in the beginning. The whole of them, I may say, though I must own an especial liking to—

> " I yearn not for the fighting fate,
> That holds and hath achieved ;
> I live to watch and meditate
> And dream—and be deceived."

You take the change gallantly. Not I, I must confess. It is all very well to talk of renunciation, and of course it has to be done. But, for my part, give me a roaring toothache ! I do like to be deceived and to dream, but

I have very little use for either watching or meditation. I was not born for age. And, curiously enough, I seem to see a contrary drift in my work from that which is so remarkable in yours. You are going on sedately travelling through your ages, decently changing with the years to the proper tune. And here am I, quite out of my true course, and with nothing in my foolish elderly head but love-stories. This must repose upon some curious distinction of temperaments. I gather from a phrase, boldly autobiographical, that you are—well, not precisely growing thin. Can that be the difference?

It is rather funny that this matter should come up just now, as I am at present engaged in treating a severe case of middle age in one of my stories—"The Justice-Clerk." The case is that of a woman, and I think that I am doing her justice. You will be interested, I believe, to see the difference in our treatments. *Secreta Vitæ* comes nearer to the case of my poor Kirstie. Come to think of it, Gosse, I believe the main distinction is that you have a family growing up around you, and I am a childless, rather bitter, very clear-eyed, blighted youth. I have, in fact, lost the path that makes it easy and natural for you to descend the hill. I am going at it straight. And where I have to go down it is a precipice.

I must not forget to give you a word of thanks for *An English Village*. It reminds me strongly of Keats, which is enough to say; and I was particularly pleased with the petulant sincerity of the concluding sentiment.

Well, my dear Gosse, here's wishing you all health and prosperity, as well as to the mistress and the bairns. May you live long, since it seems as if you would continue to enjoy life. May you write many more books as good as this one—only there's one thing impossible, you can never write another dedication that can give the same pleasure to the vanished TUSITALA.

APPENDIX I

ACCOUNT OF THE DEATH AND BURIAL OF R. L. STEVENSON, BY LLOYD OSBOURNE

He wrote hard all that morning of the last day; his half-finished book, *Hermiston*, he judged the best he had ever written, and the sense of successful effort made him buoyant and happy as nothing else could. In the afternoon the mail fell to be answered; not business correspondence—for this was left till later—but replies to the long, kindly letters of distant friends, received but two days since, and still bright in memory.

At sunset he came downstairs; rallied his wife about the forebodings she could not shake off; talked of a lecturing tour to America that he was eager to make, "as he was now so well," and played a game at cards with her to drive away her melancholy. He said he was hungry; begged her assistance to help him make a salad for the evening meal; and to enhance the little feast, he brought up a bottle of old Burgundy from the cellar. He was helping his wife on the verandah, and gaily talking, when suddenly he put both hands to his head, and cried out, "What's that?" Then he asked quickly, "Do I look strange?" Even as he did so he fell on his knees beside her. He was helped into the great hall, between his wife and his body-servant, Sosimo, losing consciousness instantly as he lay back in the arm-chair that had once been his grandfather's. Little time was lost in bringing the doctors—Anderson, of the man-of-war, and his friend Dr. Funk. They looked at him and shook their heads;

they laboured strenuously, and left nothing undone ; but he had passed the bounds of human skill.

The dying man lay back in the chair, breathing heavily, his family about him frenzied with grief, as they realised all hope was past. The dozen and more Samoans that formed part of the little clan of which he was chief sat in a wide semicircle on the floor, their reverent, troubled, sorrow-stricken faces all fixed upon their dying master. Some knelt on one knee, to be instantly ready for any command that might be laid upon them. A narrow bed was brought into the centre of the room, the Master was gently laid upon it, his head supported by a rest, the gift of Shelley's son. Slower and slower grew his respiration, wider the interval between the long, deep breaths. The Rev. Mr. Clarke was now come, an old and valued friend ; he knelt and prayed as the life ebbed away.

He died at ten minutes past eight on Monday evening the 3rd of December, in the forty-fifth year of his age.

The great Union Jack that flew over the house was hauled down, and laid over the body, fit shroud for a loyal Scotsman. He lay in the hall which was ever his pride, where he had passed the gayest and most delightful hours of his life, a noble room with open stairway and mullioned windows. In it were the treasures of his far-off Scottish home : the old carved furniture, the paintings and busts that had been in his father's house before him. The Samoans passed in procession beside his bed, kneeling and kissing his hand, each in turn, before taking their places for the long night watch beside him. No entreaty could induce them to retire, to rest themselves for the painful and arduous duties of the morrow. It would show little love for Tusitala, they said, if they did not spend their last night beside him. Mournful and silent, they sat in deep dejection, poor, simple, loyal folk, fulfilling the duty they owed their chief.

A messenger was despatched to the few chiefs connected with the family, to announce the tidings and bid

them assemble their men on the morrow for the work there was to do.

Sosimo asked on behalf of the Roman Catholics that they might be allowed to recite the prayers for the dead. Till midnight the solemn chants continued, the prolonged, sonorous prayers of the Church of Rome, in commingled Latin and Samoan. Later still, a chief arrived with his retainers, bringing a precious mat to wrap about the dead.

He too knelt and kissed the hand of Tusitala, and took his place amid the sleepless watchers. Another arrived with a fine mat, a man of higher rank, whose incipient consumption had often troubled the Master.

"Talofa Tusitala!" he said as he drew nigh, and took a long, mournful look at the face he knew so well. When, later on, he was momentarily required on some business of the morrow, he bowed reverently before retiring. "Tofa Tusitala!" he said, "Sleep, Tusitala!"

The morning of the 4th of December broke cool and sunny, a beautiful day, rare at this season of the year. More fine mats were brought, until the Union Jack lay nigh concealed beneath them. Among the new-comers was an old Mataafa chief, one of the builders of the "Road of the Loving Hearts," a man who had spent many days in prison for participation in the rebellion. "I am only a poor Samoan, and ignorant," said he, as he crouched beside the body; "others are rich, and can give Tusitala the parting presents of rich fine mats; I am poor, and can give nothing this last day he receives his friends. Yet I am not afraid to come and look the last time in my friend's face, never to see him more till we meet with God. Behold! Tusitala is dead; Mataafa is also dead to us. These two great friends have been taken by God. When Mataafa was taken, who was our support but Tusitala? We were in prison, and he cared for us. We were sick, and he made us well. We were hungry, and he fed us. The day was no longer than his kindness. You are great people and full of love. Yet who among you is so

great as Tusitala? What is your love to his love? Our clan was Mataafa's clan, for whom I speak this day; therein was Tusitala also. We mourn them both."

A meeting of chiefs was held to apportion the work and divide the men into parties. Forty were sent with knives and axes to cut a path up the steep face of the mountain, and the writer himself led another party to the summit —men chosen from the immediate family—to dig the grave on a spot where it was Mr. Stevenson's wish that he should lie. Nothing more picturesque can be imagined than the narrow ledge that forms the summit of Vaea, a place no wider than a room, and flat as a table. On either side the land descends precipitously; in front lies the vast ocean and the surf-swept reefs; to the right and left green mountains rise, densely covered with the primeval forest. Two hundred years ago the eyes of another man turned towards that same peak of Vaea as the spot that should ultimately receive his war-worn body: Soalu, a famous chief.

All the morning, Samoans were arriving with flowers; few of these were white, for they have not learned our foreign custom, and the room glowed with the many colours. There were no strangers on that day, no acquaintances; those only were called who would deeply feel the loss. At one o'clock a body of powerful Samoans bore away the coffin, hid beneath a tattered red ensign that had flown above his vessel in many a corner of the South Seas. A path so steep and rugged taxed their strength to the utmost; for not only was the journey difficult in itself, but extreme care was requisite to carry the coffin shoulder-high.

Half an hour later, the rest of his friends followed. It was a formidable ascent, and tried them hard. Nineteen Europeans, and some sixty Samoans, reached the summit. After a short rest, the Rev. W. E. Clarke read the burial service of the Church of England, interposing a prayer that Mr. Stevenson had written and

had read aloud to his family only the evening before his death :—

> We beseech Thee, Lord, to behold us with favour, folk of many families and nations, gathered together in the peace of this roof ; weak men and women, subsisting under the covert of Thy patience.
>
> Be patient still ; suffer us yet a while longer—with our broken purposes of good, and our idle endeavours against evil—suffer us a while longer to endure, and (if it may be) help us to do better. Bless to us our extraordinary mercies ; if the day come when these must be taken, have us play the man under affliction. Be with our friends ; be with ourselves. Go with each of us to rest ; if any awake, temper to them the dark hours of watching ; and when the day returns to us, our sun and comforter, call us up with morning faces and with morning hearts—eager to labour—eager to be happy, if happiness shall be our portion—and if the day be marked for sorrow, strong to endure it.
>
> We thank Thee and praise Thee ; and in the words of Him to whom this day is sacred, close our oblation.

APPENDIX II

ADDRESS OF R. L. STEVENSON TO THE CHIEFS ON THE OPENING OF THE ROAD OF GRATITUDE, OCTOBER 1894

Mr. Stevenson said, "We are met together to-day to celebrate an event and to do honour to certain chiefs, my friends,—Lelei, Mataafa, Salevao, Poè, Teleso, Tupuola Lotofaga, Tupuola Amaile, Muliaiga, Ifopo, and Fatialofa. You are all aware in some degree of what has happened. You know these chiefs to have been prisoners; you perhaps know that during the term of their confinement I had it in my power to do them certain favours. One thing some of you cannot know, that they were immediately repaid by answering attentions. They were liberated by the new administration; by the King, and the Chief Justice, and the Ta'its'ifono, who are here amongst us to-day, and to whom we all desire to tender our renewed and perpetual gratitude for that favour. As soon as they were free men—owing no man anything—instead of going home to their own places and families, they came to me; they offered to do this work for me as a free gift, without hire, without supplies, and I was tempted at first to refuse their offer. I knew the country to be poor, I knew famine threatening; I knew their families long disorganised for want of supervision. Yet I accepted, because I thought the lesson of that road might be more useful to Samoa than a thousand breadfruit trees; and because to myself it was an exquisite pleasure to receive

that which was so handsomely offered. It is now done; you have trod it to-day in coming hither. It has been made for me by chiefs; some of them old, some sick, all newly delivered from a harassing confinement, and in spite of weather unusually hot and insalubrious. I have seen these chiefs labour valiantly with their own hands upon the work, and I have set up over it, now that it is finished, the name of 'The Road of Gratitude' (the road of loving hearts) and the names of those that built it. 'In perpetuam memoriam,' we say, and speak idly. At least so long as my own life shall be spared, it shall be here perpetuated; partly for my pleasure and in my gratitude; partly for others; to continually publish the lesson of this road."

Addressing himself to the chiefs, Mr. Stevenson then said:—

"I will tell you, Chiefs, that, when I saw you working on that road, my heart grew warm; not with gratitude only, but with hope. It seemed to me that I read the promise of something good for Samoa: it seemed to me, as I looked at you, that you were a company of warriors in a battle, fighting for the defence of our common country against all aggression. For there is a time to fight, and a time to dig. You Samoans may fight, you may conquer twenty times, and thirty times, and all will be in vain. There is but one way to defend Samoa. Hear it before it is too late. It is to make roads, and gardens, and care for your trees, and sell their produce wisely, and, in one word, to occupy and use your country. If you do not, others will."

The speaker then referred to the Parable of the Talents, Matt. xxv. 14–30, and continuing, impressively asked: "What are you doing with your talent, Samoa? Your three talents, Savaii, Upolu, and Tutuila? Have you buried it in a napkin? Not Upolu at least. You have rather given it out to be trodden under feet of swine: and the swine cut down food trees and burn houses, accord-

ing to the nature of swine, or of that much worse animal, foolish man, acting according to his folly. 'Thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed.' But God has both sown and strawed for you here in Samoa; He has given you a rich soil, a splendid sun, copious rain; all is ready to your hand, half done. And I repeat to you that thing which is sure: if you do not occupy and use your country, others will. It will not continue to be yours or your children's, if you occupy it for nothing. You and your children will in that case be cast out into outer darkness, where shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth; for that is the law of God which passeth not away. I who speak to you have seen these things. I have seen them with my eyes—these judgments of God. I have seen them in Ireland, and I have seen them in the mountains of my own country—Scotland—and my heart was sad. These were a fine people in the past—brave, gay, faithful, and very much like Samoans, except in one particular, that they were much wiser and better at that business of fighting of which you think so much. But the time came to them as it now comes to you, and it did not find them ready. The messenger came into their villages, and they did not know him; they were told, as you are told, to use and occupy their country, and they would not hear. And now you may go through great tracts of the land and scarce meet a man or a smoking house, and see nothing but sheep feeding. The other people that I tell you of have come upon them like a foe in the night, and these are the other people's sheep who browse upon the foundation of their houses. To come nearer; and I have seen this judgment in Oahu also. I have ridden there the whole day along the coast of an island. Hour after hour went by and I saw the face of no living man except that of the guide who rode with me. All along that desolate coast, in one bay after another, we saw, still standing, the churches that have been built by the Hawaiians of old. There must have been many

hundreds, many thousands, dwelling there in old times, and worshipping God in these now empty churches. For to-day they were empty; the doors were closed, the villages had disappeared, the people were dead and gone; only the church stood on like a tombstone over a grave, in the midst of the white men's sugar fields. The other people had come and used that country, and the Hawaiians who occupied it for nothing had been swept away, 'where is weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

"I do not speak of this lightly, because I love Samoa and her people. I love the land, I have chosen it to be my home while I live, and my grave after I am dead; and I love the people, and have chosen them to be my people to live and die with. And I see that the day is come now of the great battle; of the great and the last opportunity by which it shall be decided whether you are to pass away like these other races of which I have been speaking, or to stand fast and have your children living on and honouring your memory in the land you received of your fathers.

"The Land Commission and the Chief Justice will soon have ended their labours. Much of your land will be restored to you, to do what you can with. Now is the time the messenger is come into your villages to summon you; the man is come with the measuring rod; the fire is lighted in which you shall be tried, whether you are gold or dross. Now is the time for the true champions of Samoa to stand forth. And who is the true champion of Samoa? It is not the man who blackens his face, and cuts down trees, and kills pigs and wounded men. It is the man who makes roads, who plants food trees, who gathers harvests, and is a profitable servant before the Lord, using and improving that great talent that has been given him in trust. That is the brave soldier; that is the true champion; because all things in a country hang together like the links of the anchor cable, one by another: but the anchor itself is industry.

" There is a friend of most of us, who is far away ; not to be forgotten where I am, where Tupuola is, where Poè Lelei, Mataafa, Solevao, Poè Teleso, Tupuola Lotofaga, Tupuolo Amaile, Muliaiga, Ifopo, Fatialofa, Lemusu are. He knew what I am telling you ; no man better. He saw the day was come when Samoa had to walk in a new path, and to be defended not only with guns and blackened faces, and the noise of men shouting, but by digging and planting, reaping and sowing. When he was still here amongst us, he busied himself planting cacao ; he was anxious and eager about agriculture and commerce, and spoke and wrote continually ; so that when we turn our minds to the same matters, we may tell ourselves that we are still obeying Mataafa. Ua tautala mai pea o ia ua mamao.

" I know that I do not speak to idle or foolish hearers. I speak to those who are not too proud to work for gratitude. Chiefs ! You have worked for Tusitala, and he thanks you from his heart. In this, I could wish you could be an example to all Samoa—I wish every chief in these islands would turn to, and work, and build roads, and sow fields, and plant food trees, and educate his children and improve his talents—not for love of Tusitala, but for the love of his brothers, and his children, and the whole body of generations yet unborn.

" Chiefs ! On this road that you have made many feet shall follow. The Romans were the bravest and greatest of people ! mighty men of their hands, glorious fighters and conquerors. To this day in Europe you may go through parts of the country where all is marsh and bush, and perhaps after struggling through a thicket, you shall come forth upon an ancient road, solid and useful as the day it was made. You shall see men and women bearing their burdens along that even way, and you may tell yourself that it was built for them perhaps fifteen hundred years before,—perhaps before the coming of Christ,—by the Romans. And the people still remember and bless

them for that convenience, and say to one another, that as the Romans were the bravest men to fight, so they were the best at building roads.

" Chiefs ! Our road is not built to last a thousand years, yet in a sense it is. When a road is once built, it is a strange thing how it collects traffic, how every year, as it goes on, more and more people are found to walk thereon and others are raised up to repair and perpetuate it and keep it alive ; so that perhaps even this road of ours may, from reparation to reparation, continue to exist and be useful hundreds and hundreds of years after we are mingled in the dust. And it is my hope that our far-away descendants may remember and bless those who laboured for them to-day."

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